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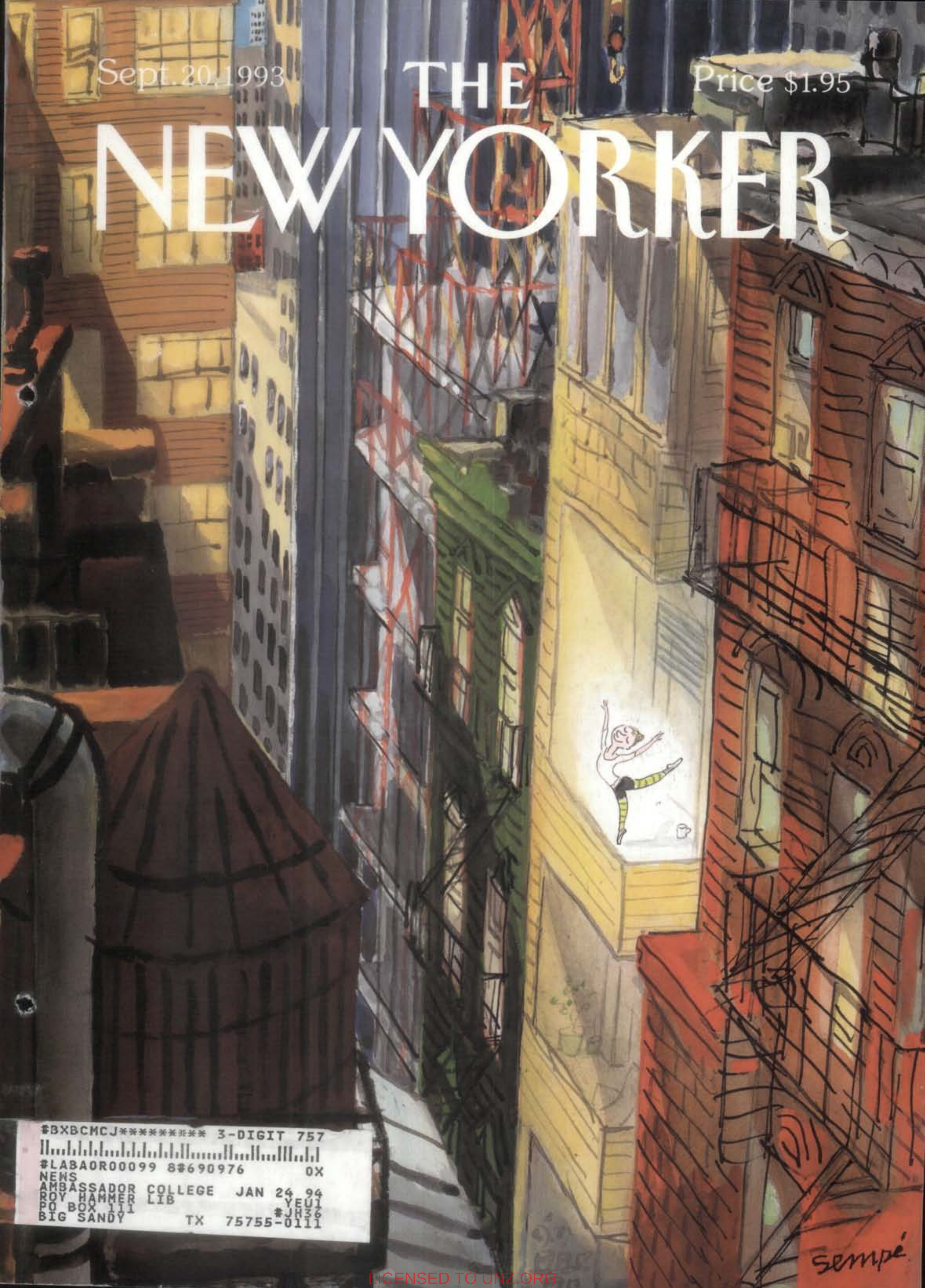

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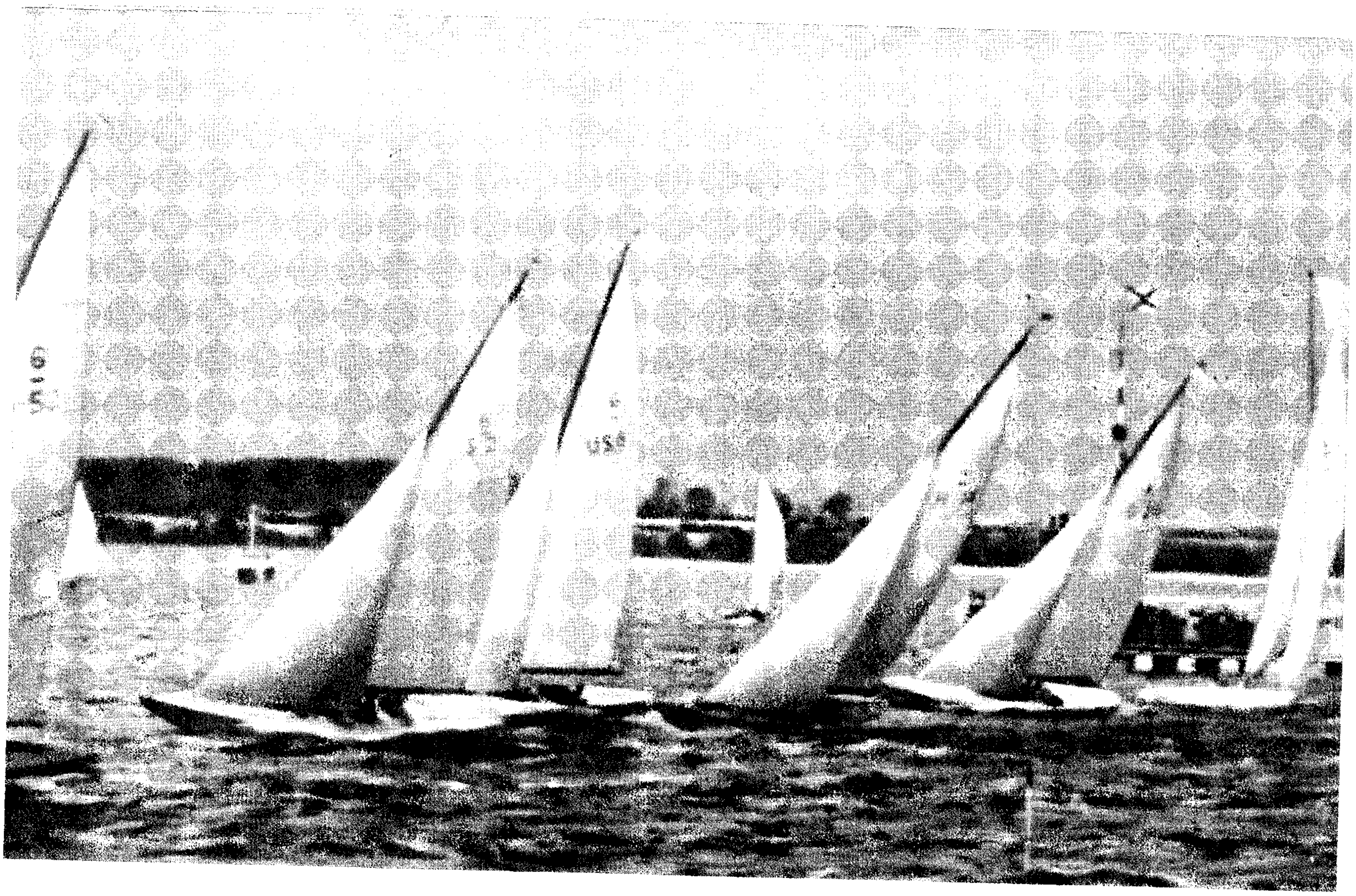
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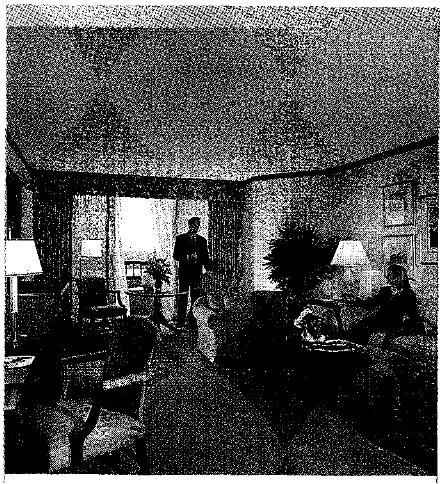

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# THE NEW YORKER

SEPTEMBER 20, 1993

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**DRAWINGS** *Victoria Roberts, Stuart Leeds, Lee Lorenz, Mike Twohy, Henry Mar*[illegible]*, Edward Koren, Dana Fradon, Michael Crawford, J.B. Handelsman, Barry Blitt, Robert Mankoff, Roz Chast, Gahan Wilson, Richard Cline, Arnie Levin, Charles Barsotti, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Danny Shanahan, Leo Cullum, Ed Fisher, Mick Stevens, William Hamilton, Peter Steiner*

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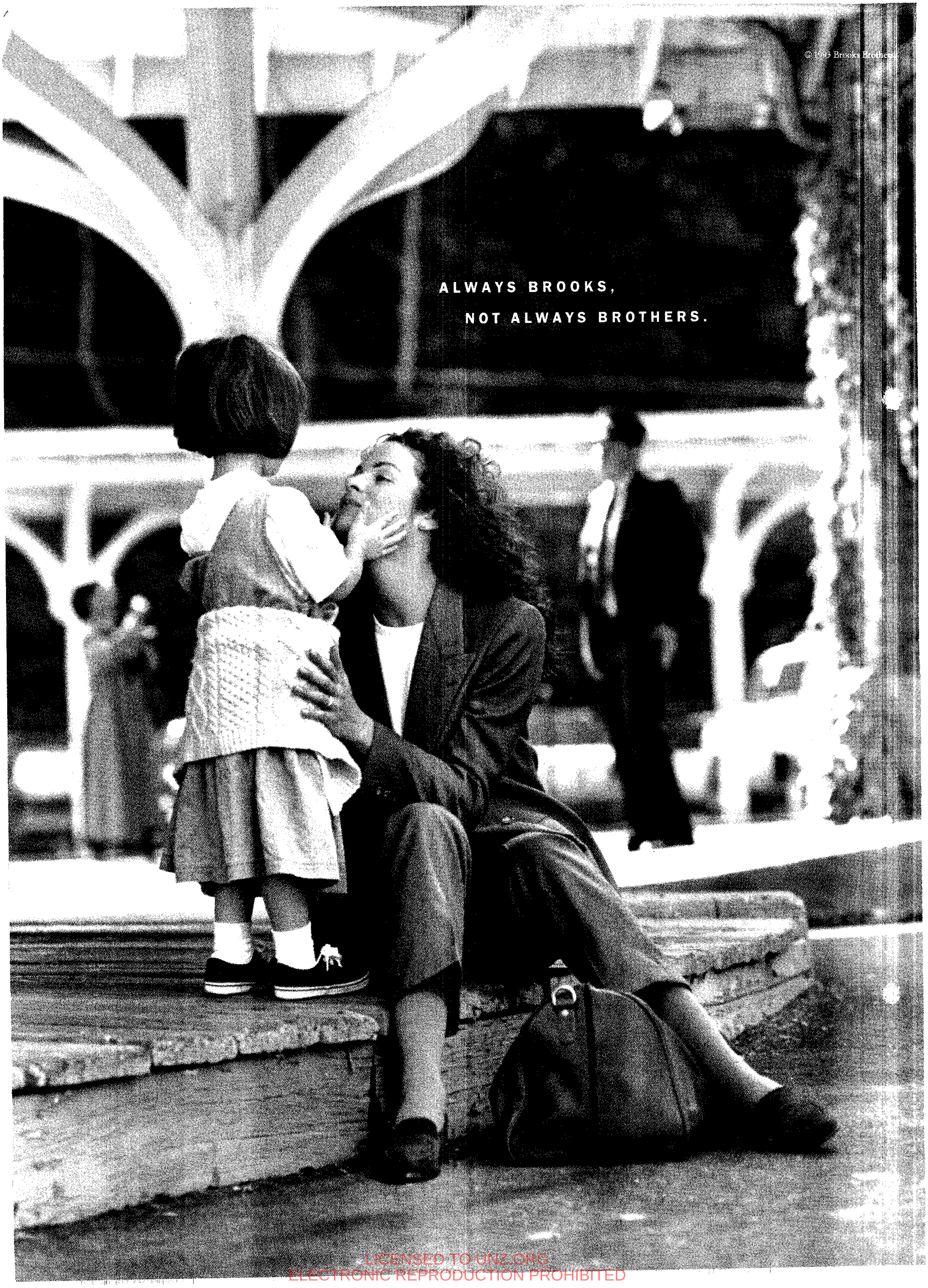
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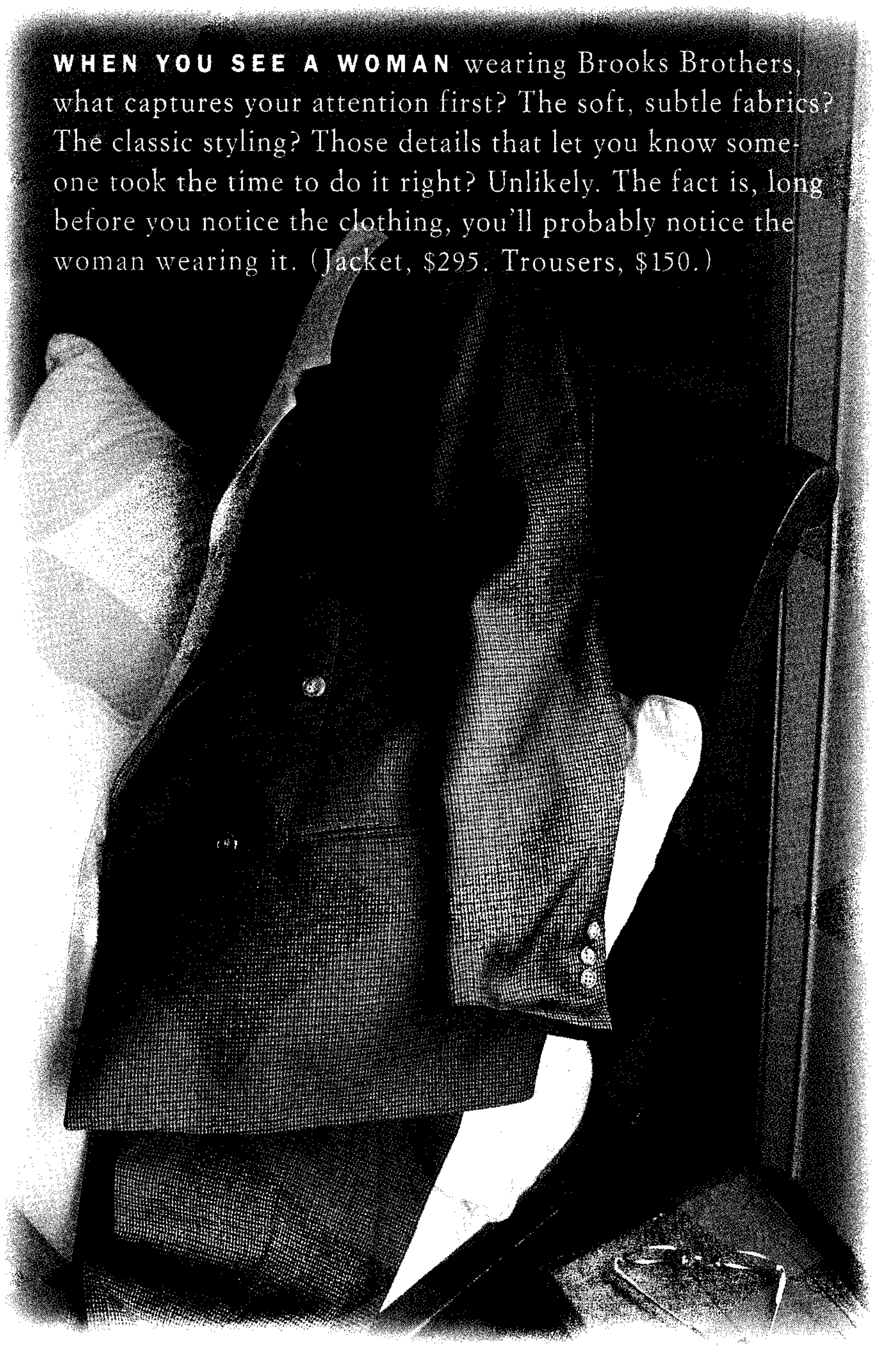

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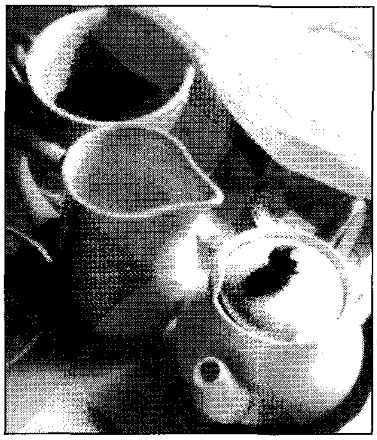

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– *Kirkus Reviews*

"I would have killed anyone who wrested this novel from my hands."
– Victoria Glendinning, *The Times* (London)

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RANDOM HOUSE

# COMMENT

## BACK TO SCHOOL (NOT)

IT'S a sign of the extraordinary nature of the troubles besetting the New York City public-school system that the person setting the city's educational agenda at the moment isn't a teacher or a principal or a school-board member, or even the newly installed schools chancellor, Ramon C. Cortines, but a cop—Edward Stancik, the special commissioner of investigation for the city's public schools. Stancik's job was created in 1990 on the recommendation of the Gill Commission, which was to the Board of Education what the Knapp Commission had been to the New York City Police Department back in 1971. He is one of two investigators who first disclosed the city's unfolding asbestos scandal, which has delayed the opening of the schools until at least September 20th, and perhaps beyond.

Busting open the asbestos scandal wasn't Stancik's first bit of detective work; it was just the first to arouse measurable public outrage. For the past year, his office has been issuing report after scathing report—on such acts of malfeasance as pervasive corruption and world-class loafing among school custodians and the sale of principalships in the Bronx. But all winter long and into the spring outrage slumbered like a hibernating beast, despite Stancik's sharp pokes at its belly.

Finally, on August 6th, the beast began to stir. Stancik and Thomas Thacher II, the School Construction Authority's inspector general, announced that tests conducted by the Board of Ed's Asbestos Task Force in the late nineteen-eighties to comply with a federal mandate were so riddled with incompetence and mismanagement, and probably fraud as well, that the results were virtually meaningless. As many as a third of the original tests appeared to have been completely fabricated. Although the Board of Ed had been engaged in asbestos abatement ever since 1979, fourteen years and more than ten million dollars later it couldn't tell parents which schools had been inspected, let alone which were safe and which were not. At last, outrage lumbered to its feet and roared.

Mayor Dinkins responded to the bel-

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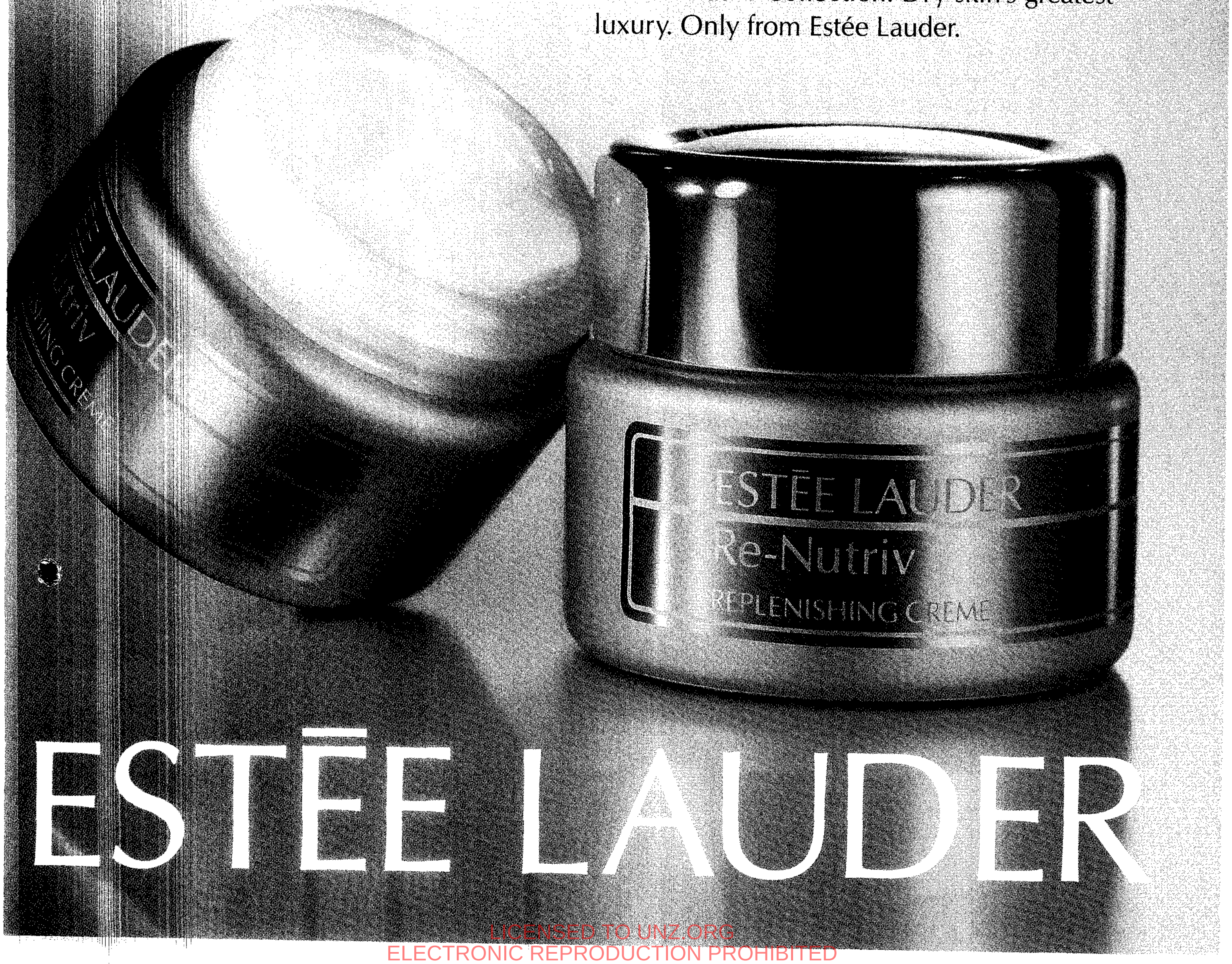
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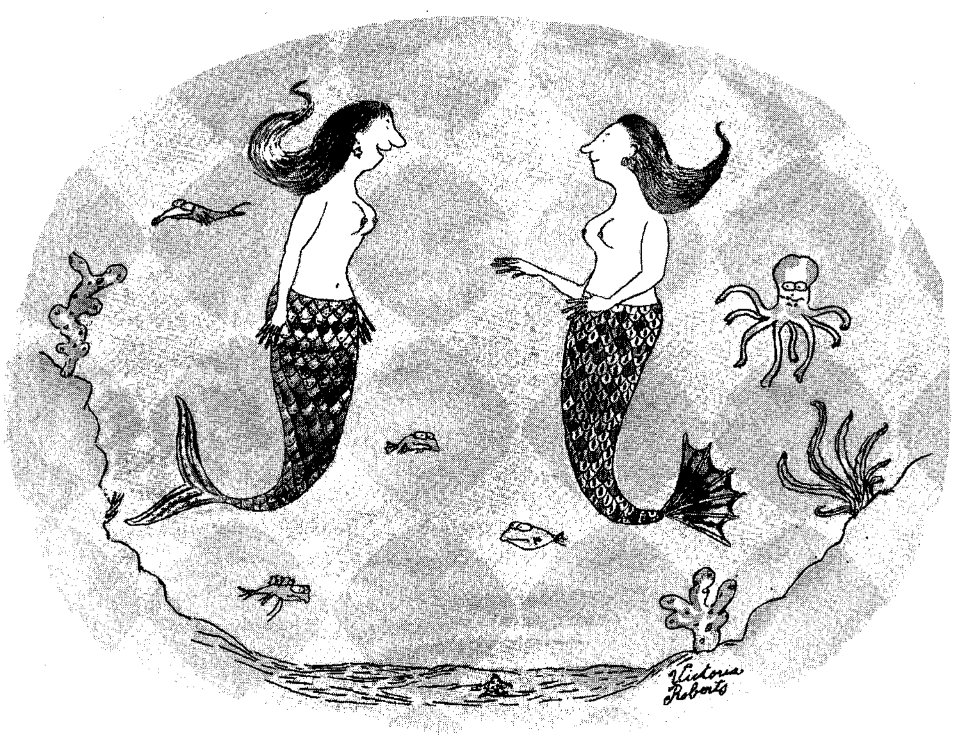

*"I thought Daryl Hannah was promised to King Neptune."*

• •

lowing with a panicky plan to reinspect each of the city's thousand and sixty-nine schools before September 9th, the scheduled opening day. Not until September 1st did the school board get around to announcing that school wouldn't start on time after all. Parents had to scramble to make alternative child-care arrangements. The belated announcement and the uncertainty and disruption it caused were nearly as scandalous as the asbestos crisis itself.

The danger posed by asbestos in the schools, though it is real, has been blown out of proportion. The public housing, private homes, office buildings, day-care centers, and church buildings that children will be staying in while the Board of Ed completes its reinspections aren't necessarily any safer than the schools. In a hearing before the City Council in 1990, Albert Appleton, the city's environmental-protection commissioner, reported that of a total of eight hundred thousand buildings in New York City five hundred and forty-four thousand contained significant amounts of asbestos, and that in nearly ninety per cent of those buildings damage had exposed the asbestos to the air. Anyway, a New York City schoolchild is considerably more likely to be killed right now by a stray bullet in the street while the schools are closed—or, for that matter, to be assaulted, or even murdered, *in* school—than to die of asbestosis many years later. Yet the growing incidence of violence in and around schools has aroused less in the way of sustained and unified outrage among parents, school-board members, and city officials than has the report on the asbestos inspections—the least sensational of Stancik's reports.

The real scandal in New York's public schools, and in public schools in many other parts of the country, too, is not what's in the walls but what goes on every day in the classrooms they enclose. Besides the violence, there is the overcrowding, which makes it impossible for kids to get the individual attention they need. There is the severe shortage of supplies—not just exotica, like computers and copying machines, but such basic stuff as chalk and crayons and construction paper, for which many conscientious teachers end up spending hundreds of dollars out of their own pockets. And, finally, in this city particularly, there is the incredible dilapidation of the schools. This last item is at the heart of the asbestos scandal, for if the schools weren't literally falling apart little asbestos would be exposed. First Deputy Mayor Norman Steisel, who has been overseeing the reinspection of the schools, laid the blame for the investigators' slow progress on the surprisingly high number of schools with crumbling ceilings, peeling walls, and rotting floors. But how could that have been a surprise?

Stancik's report on the school custodians, which came out last November, provides some insight into the ineptitude of the school board's Division of School Facilities, which oversees the city's nine hundred and fourteen custodians, and which oversaw the disastrous Asbestos Task Force until it was disbanded, in August. The custodian of one of the Division's own buildings was among the top nine cited for exceptionally gross abuses: he had pursued a second career on school time, using his yacht as an office. Stancik's report also condemned the notorious custodial contract, which requires custodians to perform few actual tasks (to mop the hallways and classrooms three times a year, for example) and gives them virtual autonomy over all aspects of school maintenance, from how to spend their six-digit budgets to whom they hire. The system has produced spectacular nepotism and a backlog of forty-four thousand unfilled work orders. The consequent premature deterioration of the city's schools will eventually cost millions. Yet this summer the state legislature failed to pass a bill that would have made city-school custodians more accountable to school principals for their performance.

For nearly all of the two years before the asbestos scandal erupted, the school board devoted most of its energy to an idiotic wrangle over a few hundred words of the proposed Rainbow Curriculum—words that advocated teaching tolerance for gays. That controversy led to the ouster of one of the most courageous and sensible reformers ever to have served as chancellor of the New York City public schools—Joseph Fernandez. The challenge to Fernandez's successor, Chancellor Cortines, will be to focus the attention of the school board and the city on the harder problems once the current scandal fades. It won't be easy. The outrage is already beginning to curdle in familiar ways; in the *Post*, for example, the columnist Ray Kerrison has returned to the tired issue of the Rainbow Curriculum and is encouraging his readers to demand the ouster of Cortines if he refuses to condemn it. The schools need that the way they need a great big shipment of asbestos. ♦

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# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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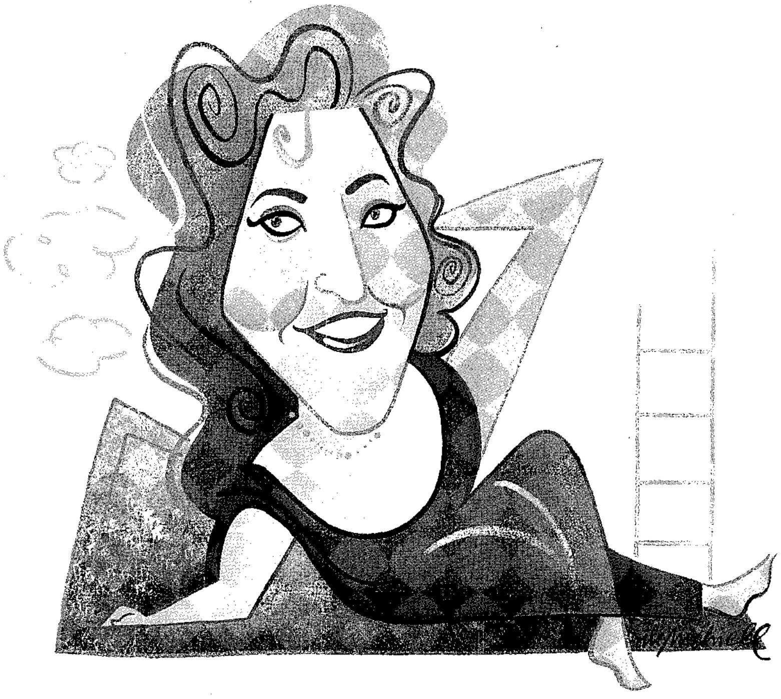
## THE THEATRE

### Twisting the Knife

There is something wonderfully apt about the director David Esbjornson's decision to cast Charles Busch as one of the title characters in "The Maids," the 1947 Jean Genet work, which begins performances next week at the Classic Stage Company. This is, after all, one of the great modern plays about unconventional role playing—something Busch, a fine drag actor, has often brought off with panache. Echoing the grisly real-life case of the Papin sisters, the domestics Claire and Solange (the latter is Busch's part) plot to murder their employer, Madame; that Madame is at times impersonated by Claire complicates the drama.

Edmund White, in his new biography of Genet, tells us that the writer was unhappy with the way the director Louis Jouvet presented "The Maids" in its first production. The playwright thought it had been pitched too obviously toward the tastes of bourgeois Paris—exactly the audience he liked to insult. White reports an apocryphal story that makes his attitude clear. "When a lady told Genet, after seeing his play, that she always gave her old dresses to her maid, he asked her coldly, 'And does she give you hers?' "



*Claudia Shear in "Blown Sideways Through Life."*

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

### OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

*(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)*

**Blown Sideways Through Life**—Claudia Shear's one-woman show about the sixty-five jobs, "from whorehouse to penthouse," she has held over the years. Previews through Sept. 20. Opens Sept. 21 at 8. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

**El Greco**—An opera about the Spanish painter, with music by William Harper and a libretto by Bernardo Solano. Tom O'Horgan directed. In previews. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

**In Persons**—*The actors Eli Wallach and Anne* Jackson, married for forty-six years, celebrate their lives in the theatre. Martin Charnin was the director. Previews begin Sept. 18. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

**The Maids**—Jean Genet's 1947 play begins previews Sept. 21. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

**Oedipus the King**—Timothy Wheeler is the troubled tyrant in the Pearl Theatre Company's production of Sophocles' play. Previews through Sept. 19. Opens Sept. 21 at 8. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708.)

**Thuli**—The South African performer Thuli Dumakude sings and tells stories of her homeland. She is accompanied by the musicians Valerie Naranjo and Emma. Previews begin Sept. 18. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

**Young Playwrights Festival**—Instead of heading back to school just yet, five lucky dramatists are getting a taste of the Off Broadway life. The winners of this year's Young Playwrights competition are Kim Daniel, Carter L. Bays, Jerome D. Hairston, Madeleine George, and Dyron Holmes. Four of the works, all one-acts, will be presented in fully staged productions, and one will be given a staged reading during the festival. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

### OPENED RECENTLY

**Angels in America: Millennium Approaches**—The first half of Tony Kushner's epic work is set in 1985, at the height of the Reagan counter-revolution, and it maps the trickle-down effect of self-interest as Kushner's characters ruthlessly pursue their private and public destinies. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play is a saga about sexual politics, death, and decency. Not to be missed. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

**Annie Warbucks**—Kathryn Zaremba, an infant phenomenon if ever there was one, has the title role in this beguiling sequel to "Annie." After sixteen years, the old team—Thomas Meehan (book) and Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin (music and lyrics)—is still in top form. Donna McKechnie, Harve Presnell, Harvey Evans, Marguerite McIntyre, and Raymond Thorne—to say nothing of a merry scattering of orphans—give strong support. Choreography by Peter Gennaro, scenery by Ming Cho Lee, costumes by Theoni V. Aldredge, and lighting by Ken Billington. (8/23 & 30/93) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

**Black Comedy/White Liars**—"Black Comedy" is an impeccable revival of Peter Shaffer's farce, in which dark becomes light and vice versa. This drawing-room comedy of the sixties is the apotheosis of the sight gag, with lines to match. Peter MacNicol plays the leading role, and he is given strong support by Nancy Marchand and Brian Murray. In "White Liars," the curtain-raiser, it is Miss Marchand who takes command, as a bogus *baroness turned fortune-teller. John Lee* Beatty designed the spectacular settings, and Gerald Gutierrez directed. (9/13/93) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

**Blood Brothers**—A glum non-musical musical, imported from Britain, about twin boys who are separated at birth. The boys later become friends, love the same girl, and die violent deaths. Willy Russell wrote book, music, and lyrics, to no avail. The cast includes Shaun and David Cassidy and Petula Clark. (5/10/93) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**The First Lulu**—Eric Bentley's version of a hundred-year-old play by Frank Wedekind, presented by the Jean Cocteau Repertory. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

**Forbidden Broadway 1993**—Once again, a galaxy of parodies that sharpen into satire. Among the shows under consideration are "Guys and Dolls," "Falsettos," "Les Misérables," and "The Phantom of the Opera." Gerard Alessandrini, as if you had to be told, is the clever writer and director, and Susanne Blakeslee, Allison Briner, Brad Oscar, and Craig Wells are the performers. (1/25/93) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **Note:** This edition comes to a close on Sept. 19; "Forbidden Broadway 1994" begins performances on Oct. 5.

**The Hamlet Festival**—The first cycle of the Prince of Denmark extravaganza runs through Sept. 26. At Nada Inc., 167 Ludlow St.: "The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke" (the second-quarto version of the play), directed by Randolph Curtis Rand. . . . Weekend cabaret performances of Arden Party's solo "Hamlet," Janice Hoffman's "Gertrude's Revenge," and Stuart Sherman's "Hamlet (Or Else What?)." . . . ¶ At the House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St.: Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead." (For tickets to all events, call 420-1466.)

**Howard Crabtree's Whoop-Dee-Doo!**—The sixteen original songs in this revue range from a wistful love note to Elizabeth Taylor Hilton Wilding Todd Fisher Burton Burton Warner Fortensky to a tribute to Private Banana by his fellow-soldiers ("the new recruit is a fruit") to "Blue Flame," a gu[illegible]y number sung by a moth. Mr. Crabtree and his collaborators are witty and topical, and the show is an exuberant delight. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. For information about tickets, call 777-7474.)

**Jeffrey**—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

**Kiss of the Spider Woman**—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera, in the title role. Harold Prince was the direc-

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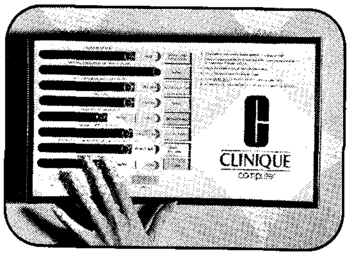
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tor. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. The cast also includes Anthony Crivello, as Valentin, and Jeff Hyslop, as Molina. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

**Later Life**—The reunion, after thirty years, of a middle-aged man and woman who were once in love is at the heart of this play by A. R. Gurney. The scene is a cocktail party in Boston, where the couple are constantly interrupted by the other guests, who arrive two by two. Mr. Gurney has written with his customary wit and perception, and the actors do him proud. The play was seen recently at Playwrights Horizons. (6/14/93) (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

**Let Loose the Dogs of Improv**—Chicago City Limits' current show. (Jan Hus Playhouse, 351 E. 74th St. 772-8707.)

**A Perfect Ganesh**—Terrence McNally's play tells the story of two middle-aged women from Connecticut making what turns out to be a pilgrimage through India. With Charlotte Moore, Helen Stenborg, Garret Dillahunt, and Dominic Cuskern. John Tillinger directed. (7/12/93) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Sept. 19.)

**Shakespeare for My Father**—A marvellous one-woman show, in which Lynn Redgrave reviews her own life in a search for her unloving father, Michael Redgrave. She combines anecdotes, brilliant thumbnail impersonations of British actors, and wry reminiscence with passages from Shakespeare. (5/10/93) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

**The Sisters Rosensweig**—Wendy Wasserstein's play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. With Michael Learned, Linda Lavin, Joanne Camp, and Hal Linden. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

**Three Hotels**—This new play by Jon Robin Baitz is no more than a technical exercise, but what technique! Debra Monk and Ron Rifkin are superb as husband and wife; the versatile Joe Mantello directed. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

**The Who's Tommy**—Pete Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill, but director Des McAnuff's production is caught on the horns of a theatrical dilemma that no amount of slick, exhausting spectacle can resolve. The hero, that deaf, dumb, and blind kid, is spectacularly passive, and thus unreachable, unknowable, and essentially undramatic. (5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

**Working Out with Leona**—A musical comedy, with a score by Michael Capece and Paul Radalat, lyrics by Nelson Jewell, and a book by Mary Lee Miller and Mr. Jewell. Presented by the HIV Ensemble. (Sanford Meisner Theatre, 164 Eleventh Ave., at 22nd St. 695-6847. Closes Oct. 4.)

### LONG RUNS

**BEAU JEST:** Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **OLEANNA:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

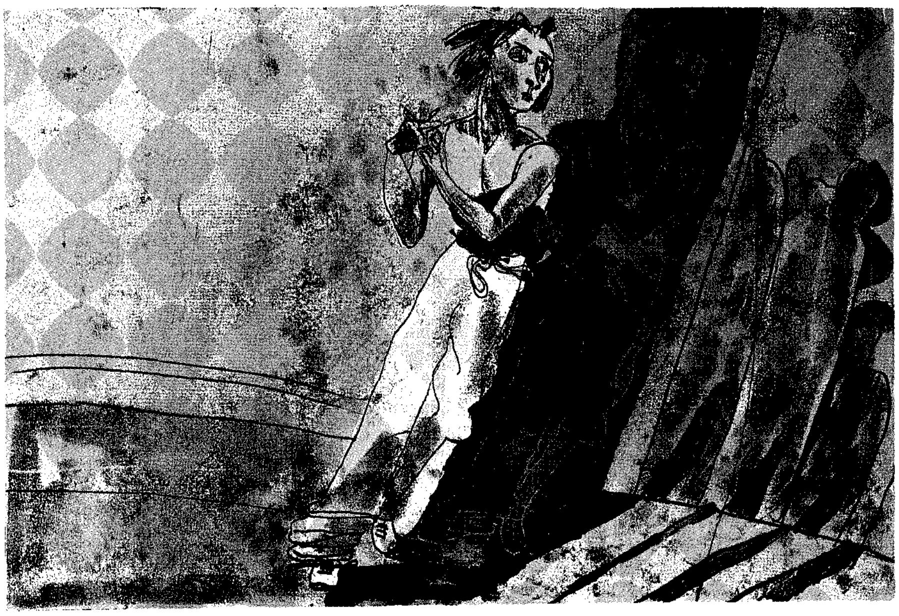
## DANCE

### *Translations*

In Russian ballet, they have a word for their borrowings of Spanish dancing: *españolada.* In France, they have the word the Russians borrowed: *espagnolade.* In Japan, they don't have a word for it yet, but they have a woman for the job: Yasuko Nagamine. In a country whose theatre is framed on one side by all-male Kabuki and Noh drama and on the other by all-female Takarazuka spectacle, Nagamine's work stands brazenly apart.

A bright-red dress in a children's book and some taboo recordings of Spanish music fired Nagamine's interest in flamenco dancing when she was a child. After studying modern dance and flamenco in Japan, she went to Madrid in 1960 to study the Spanish art. From there, the determined Japanese soloist worked her Spanish dances to various ends, sometimes as pure flamenco in Madrid clubs, sometimes as hybrid Japanese flamenco in Tokyo theatres.

"Sotoba Komachi," which the fifty-seven-year-old Nagamine will present at the Equitable Center Auditorium (September 15-19), is derived from Noh literature and peppered with flamenco features. The title means "Komachi at the Grave Site" and refers to the faded beauty of an intensely powerful woman. No tabi socks or, for that matter, staccato heels for Nagamine's Komachi. Her bare feet tread the boards with accents far more brusque than Noh glidings yet less ferocious than flamenco pummel. The scene is definitely Japanese, but the style, whatever you call it, definitely has a Spanish accent.



*Twyla Tharp at City Center.*

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

**Twyla Tharp**—An engagement in which Ms. Tharp demonstrates the working process with her dancers. Each program includes classics from her repertoire as well as a new dance phrase, which she will develop onstage. Adding a further note of naked verisimilitude, the performances are given without benefit of costumes or production components. Sept. 15 and Sept. 17-18 at 7:30: "Fever," "Sextet," a new dance phrase, "Nine Sinatra Songs," and "Baker's Dozen." . . ¶ Sept. 16 and Sept. 21 at 7:30, and Sept. 18 at 2: "Octet," an untitled work, a new dance phrase, and "In the Upper Room." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Sept. 25.)

**Elizabeth Streb/Ringside**—The great red brick arches of the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage have long since been walled up, but within its echoing reaches the choreographer Elizabeth Streb has found the perfect space for the finely calibrated rigors of her full-tilt, high-impact "equipment pieces": "Lookup" (première), "Surface" (première), "Free-flight," "Impact," and a number of "interactions," or brief movement bites, titled "Little Ease," "Kid Action," and "Stick Solo." (Cadman Plaza West and Old Front St., Brooklyn. Sept. 15-16 (previews) and Sept. 17-21, all at 8. Through Sept. 25. For reservations, call 206-6674.)

**Yasuko Nagamine**—A Japanese flamenco dancer, with her company of dancers and musicians, in "Sotoba Komachi," an evening-length dance/theatre production. (Equitable Center Auditorium, 787 Seventh Ave., at 50th St. Sept. 15-18 at 8 and Sept. 19 at 3. For reservations, call 664-0612.)

**Michelle Spencer**—A San Francisco performance artist, in "Grass and Fire and Spit," a program combining slides, dance, and text. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 15-17 at 8.)

**Connor Dances**—Colin Connor, a former member of the José Limón Dance Company, with Ernie Plauche, Pamala Jones, Roxane D'Orleans-Juste, Risa Steinberg, and others, in a program of new and repertory works. (Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. Sept. 17-19 at 9. For reservations, call 1-718 871-8676.)

**Roots of Brazil**—A New York-based ensemble, in "Sapopema," a music-and-dance piece about the natives of the Amazon Basin. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, W. 120th St. and Riverside Dr. Sept. 18 at 7:45. For tickets, call 1-718 622-1561.)

**Balé Teatro Castro Alves**—The opening performance of an engagement by a Brazilian dance company that combines classical and contemporary African elements. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Sept. 21 at 8. Through Sept. 26.)

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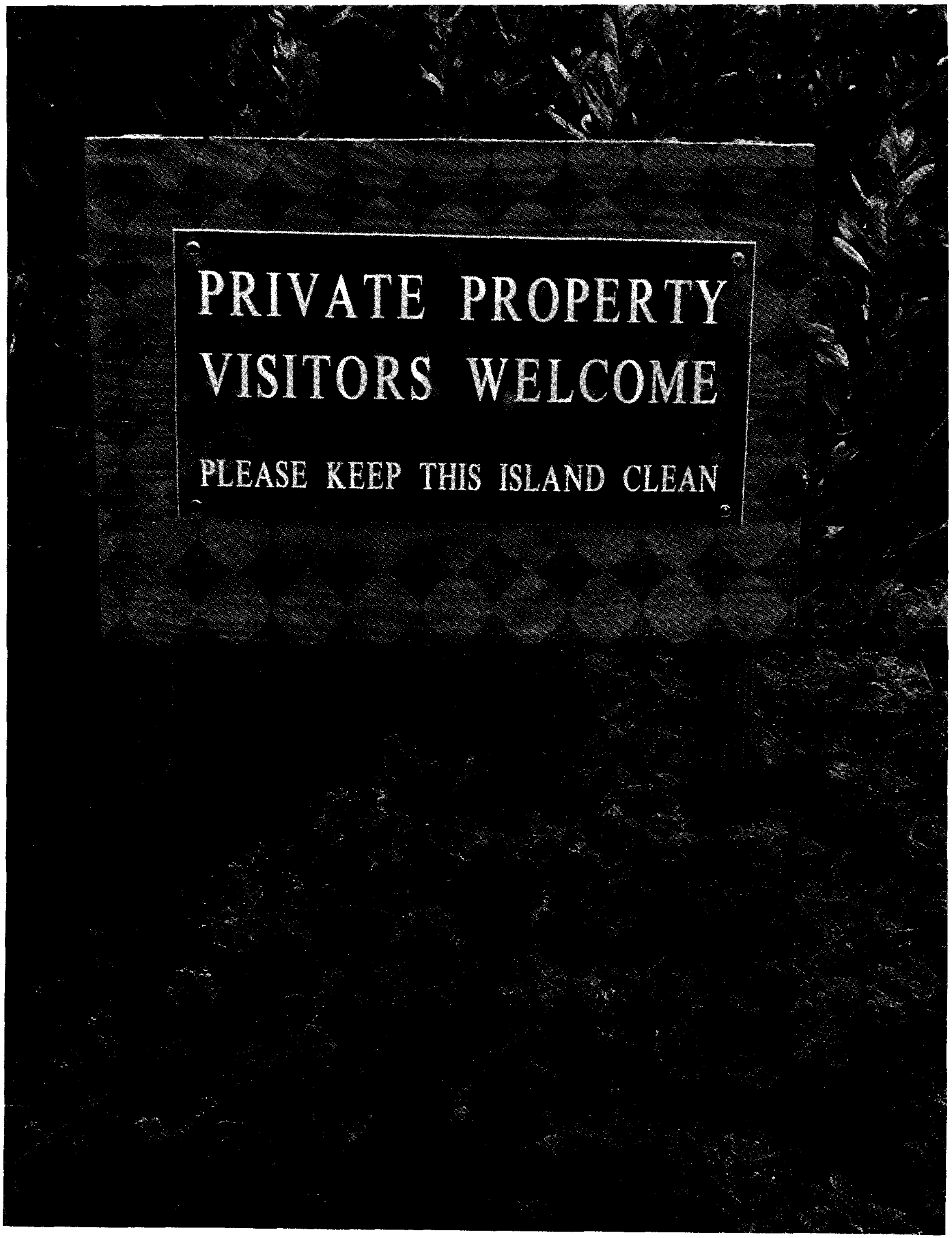

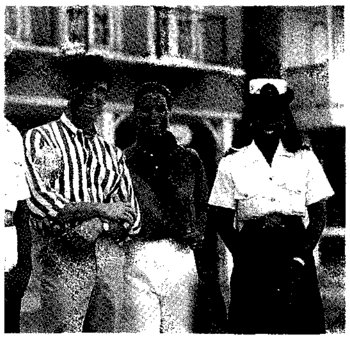

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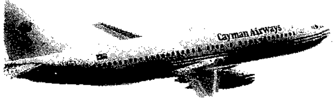

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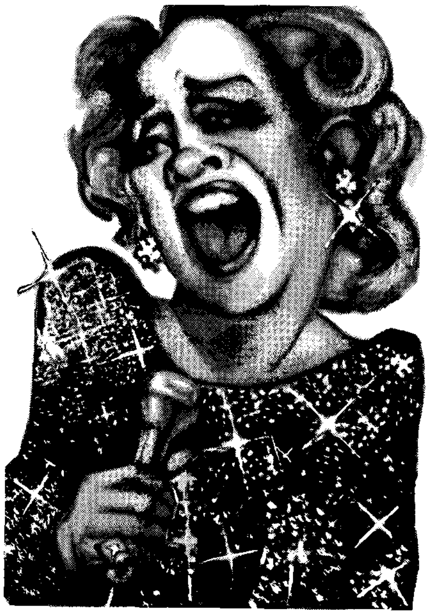
# NIGHT LIFE

## *Cook's Tour*

The composer or lyricist tribute has become a staple of the cabaret scene, with recent notable club acts centering on the works of Kern, Porter, Rodgers, Berlin, and Dorothy Fields, one of the few women to flourish in the rough-and-tumble of Tin Pan Alley. In fact, all the above composers—not to mention Sigmund Romberg, Jimmy McHugh, Harold Arlen, Arthur Schwartz, Oscar Levant, Morton Gould, Burton Lane, and Cy Coleman—were pleased to set Fields' lyrics to music. Many of her songs have become ingrained in the American psyche: "I Can't Give You Anything but Love," "On the Sunny Side of the Street," "The Way You Look Tonight." She survives scrutiny with the best of them; not until Sondheim did anyone rival her interior rhymes. Her career spanned nearly half a century: cultural light-years separate the coy come-on of "I Won't Dance" (introduced by debonair Astaire in the 1935 movie "Roberta") from the brazen hussiness of "Big Spender" (from "Sweet Charity," of 1966).



*Barbara Cook at the Café Carlyle.*

JOHANNA GOODMAN

The latest performer to focus her magnifying glass on the Fields œuvre is Barbara Cook. The inimitable soprano's recording of thirteen Fields classics, "Close as Pages in a Book," is hitting the racks just as she settles in for a seven-week stay at the Café Carlyle. You can bet that a few Fields lyrics will figure on her song list. But there's one Fields quatrain that singers seem reluctant to utter—at least in the tonier clubs—though it would surely get an ovation from the customers: "I'll pay the check, Without complaining! I'll pay the check, I'm entertaining!"

*(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)*

**Algonquin Hotel,** 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—"Peter Howard Celebrates Broadway," a tribute to a hundred years of musical comedy, featuring veteran performers **lee roy reams** and **jeanne lehman,** runs all this week in the Oak Room. Dining.

**Arthur's Tavern,** 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Some bars cater to a specific clientele, but Arthur's is a free-for-all. It's a small, strange Village bar that looks like a pack rat's attic. In the back is a compact, bar-encircled stage, where one can usually find patrons listening to, cheering on, and joining in with the musicians. Sundays belong to Lee Lorenz and his band.

**Ballroom,** *253 W. 28th St.* (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keeffian animal skulls. Look closer and you'll find that the skulls are wearing earrings. After the show, be sure to check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams. Brazilian singer **ney matogrosso,** a male soprano with a penchant for flamboyant evening wear, is often compared to stylish androgynous Northerners like David Bowie and Prince. But Matogrosso is less a pop chameleon than a savvy interpreter of songs by some of his country's most established composers. His engagement here continues this week, Tuesday through Saturday. Closed Mondays.

**Blue Note,** 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Once you get past the rough bits here—the hordes of tourists, the cattle-car seating, the stiff prices—you're likely to find yourself face to face with some of the biggest names in jazz. **billy cobham** is here through Sept. 19, with the Larry Coryell duo. Dining.

**Bottom Line,** 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This big, airy folk-and-rock club used to be the site of a lot of music-industry bashes, but now it's an eclectic and hard-to-figure-out venue for the good, the bad, and (sometimes still) the great. **loudon wainwright iii** is here on Sept. 17-18. When this urban folksinger began making records in the early seventies, he was hailed as, among other things, the Charlie Chaplin of rock and the Woody Allen of folk. Many albums and several film and television appearances later, Wainwright has released a new live album titled, fittingly enough, "Career Moves," *which the singer describes as commemorating* "twenty-five years of making a damn good living on the periphery of the music business."

**Bradley's,** 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. On Sept. 13-18, a duo led by the pianist **kirk lightsey** performs. Beginning Sept. 20: the **santi debriano** quartet, with Debriano on bass and featuring **david sanchez** on sax.

**Café Sin-é,** 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or espresso and waits for some musician or other to blow in and play a set. Guitarist and singer Kevin Connolly will be here on Sept. 17. **susan's room,** an L.A.-based acoustic-rock group headed by singer-songwriter Susan Streitwieser, will be in on Sept. 20. Streitwieser, whose range of songs includes a cover of Prince's "When Doves Cry" as well as the penny-whistle-backed "Truth or Dare," has a commanding, soulful voice.

**Carlyle Hotel,** Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is currently home to the incomparable **barbara cook,** with her sublime soprano and accompanist wally harper in tow. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **ronny white** presides at the piano.

**CBGB & OMFUG,** 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club—a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti—is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to burn brightly here.

**China Club,** 2130 Broadway, at 75th St. (877-1166)—Glam-seekers come here hoping to rub shoulders with models and celebrities. It's the kind of place with some rooms you can go into and others you can't. Decorative touches include a big aquarium over the bar, Chinese folding screens, and snapshots of the fabulous. Once in a while, rock stars show up to jam after a performance in town. At other times, you'll find a roster of pop upstarts. Dress is come-as-if-you-were-in-L.A. On Sept. 15: **zulugroove,** a band in the mellow, jam-happy tradition favored by Deadheads and neo-Deadheads (i.e., people who listened to the Spin Doctors before they were on MTV). The dance rock of Ten Wings is featured on Sept. 17; and on Sept. 21 there's a triple bill of bracing alternative pop, with Wicked City, Dog, and Legendary Von Lmo.

**Cornelia Street Café,** 29 Cornelia St. (989-9319)—In the basement of this tucked-aw[illegible] Village restaurant-bar is a narrow, whit[illegible] brick-walled room, decorated with a few tables and steampipes, where you'll find music, poetry readings, and theatre-of-the-cramped. The restaurant itself is a wine-and-candlelight neighborhood café.

**Duplex,** 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—A two-floor entertainment center. The bright, clean, wedge-shaped downstairs bar has French windows giving onto the bustle of Seventh Avenue, but the clamor indoors is far greater. Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, and the waitresses sing/shout pop standards with risqué lyrics and fire off wisecracks across the room; patrons are encouraged to take the mike, too. Upstairs, there's a quieter bar and a cabaret, where you'll find a variety of performers nightly.

**Eagle Tavern,** 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—An Irish bar, way out on the western edge of town, where the great potholed boulevards turn to cobblestones and the world across the Hudson flashes its come-hither signs. The back room has Hibernian sounds on Fridays. Fiddler Brian Conway, button accordionist John Nolan, and guitarist Mary Coogan, of Cherish the Ladies, will be in on Sept. 17.

**Fat Tuesday's,** 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—A softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz grotto. Starting Sept. 21: the **scott hamilton** quartet. When Hamilton hit New York nearly twenty years ago, he was like a fish out of water. While his fellow tenor saxophonists worshipped at the altar of Coltrane, the Rhode Island native was sifting the classic swing of players like Lester Young, Ben Webster, and Illinois Jacquet. These days, with the traditionalists at the gate, guess who's getting the last laugh. His own sound now firmly in place, Hamilton can elicit pure pleasure with his lyricism and rhythmic ease. Conservatism plays *no* part *in his stance: this is* swing as an active, vital force. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **les paul,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Dining.

**Grand,** *76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)*—A *cross* between an old-fashioned split-level night club and a parking garage decorated fo[illegible] senior prom. Despite the balloons and the candy-colored lights, this is a serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. You can either vibrate up front, near a wall-o'-speakers, or lounge around the bar in the back and follow the show on a video monitor. On Sept. 17, the esteemed singer **ruth brown** appears. Back in the fifties, before scoring a bunch of pop and R. & B. hits, Brown made a name for herself by wowing audiences at the Apollo, where she was billed as Miss Rhythm. These days, the singer performs less regularly, mostly at jazz festivals; so the faithful (and the curious) shouldn't pass up this club gig.

**Irving Plaza,** 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St.—This two-floor establishment has been all things

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Man Ray, *Margaret*, circa 1935, solarized gelatin silver print, 9 ¾ x 7 ¾ inches. Provenance: Juliet Man Ray. Estimate: $60,000-80,000

CHRISTIE'S

to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Physically, the place is sagging a bit, but that's part of its appeal. On Sept. 16: **JOHN HIATT.** His tunes have been covered by folks with names like Bonnie, Willie, Conway, and Iggy, but Hiatt is more than just a songwriters' songwriter. He's a charming, intuitive performer as well, and his new solo album, "Perfectly Good Guitar," lives up to the promise of its title. On Sept. 17: **MARIA MC KEE,** who rose to cult fame in the mid-eighties as singer for the great (and short-lived) Los Angeles rock band Lone Justice. McKee has just put out her second solo effort, "You Gotta Sin to Get Saved," and her incendiary voice, with its echoes of Janis and Aretha, continues to be a natural wonder. For concert information, call 249-8870. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

**KNICKERBOCKER,** 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The musicians set up in the dining room, a clubby-looking space with leather banquettes and well-preserved collectibles: Sunday *Herald Tribune* covers, First World War posters, Hirschfeld drawings. Up front at the bar, you can keep your eye on the musicians, the conversationalists, and sidewalk life. Pianist Russ Kassoff and bassist Linc Milliman perform on Sept. 15-18.

**LA CAVE ON FIRST,** 1125 First Ave., at 62nd St. (759-4011)—Though situated in the basement of an Upper East Side Mexican restaurant (Pancho Villa), this is an establishment worth checking out. There's nothing trendy or even distinguishing about it, and that may be the secret of its appeal. The entertainment varies, from tap dancing one night to gospel the next.

**MANNY'S CAR WASH,** 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the square-by-definition Upper East Side club scene. Don't expect to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp Band bring their Cajun boogie from Louisiana to the Upper East Side on Sept. 16. On Sept. 17, catch Little Anthony—no, not of the Imperials but of the Loco-Motives, a nine-piece outfit offering big-band blues.

**MAXWELL'S,** 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. Newcomers from the Midwest, the **HOWARDS** arrive on Sept. 16. On Sept. 18: **SUPERCHUNK,** a hot export of Chapel Hill's thriving indie-rock scene.

**MICHAEL'S PUB,** 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The main dining room strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. Still, there's a real nice red telephone booth when you walk in the door. All this week, **MEL TORMÉ** continues a not-to-be-missed club engagement. In performance, Tormé puts on display two great treasures: his own resilient, rhythmically agile voice and the collection of American songbook standards his voice caresses. Tormé believes in good old-fashioned entertainment, but shtick almost never intrudes on his act. The pipes are still intact, and so is his taste.

**RAINBOW & STARS,** 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret with plenty of niceties, if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and an amazing view. All this week, veteran pianist/composer **ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY** performs. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

**SOUNDS OF BRAZIL,** 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest, this venerable club has many selling points: tropical drinks, Brazilian food, faux palm trees, a thatch-roofed bar. The live music is primarily from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, and the dance floor is usually hopping. **GIL SCOTT-HERON** and the Amnesia Express are here on Sept. 15-16. **SAMBA NOVO** comes in for a night on Sept. 18. Blues guitarist **ALI FARKA TOURÉ** will perform on Sept. 21. Dining. Closed Sundays.

**TAVERN ON THE GREEN,** Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—With the opening of the Chestnut Room, this legendary tourist haven is making a bid to attract serious jazz fans. The club, which resembles a hunting lodge, is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings have been impressive. The **BILLY TAYLOR** trio continues through Sept. 19. Dining.

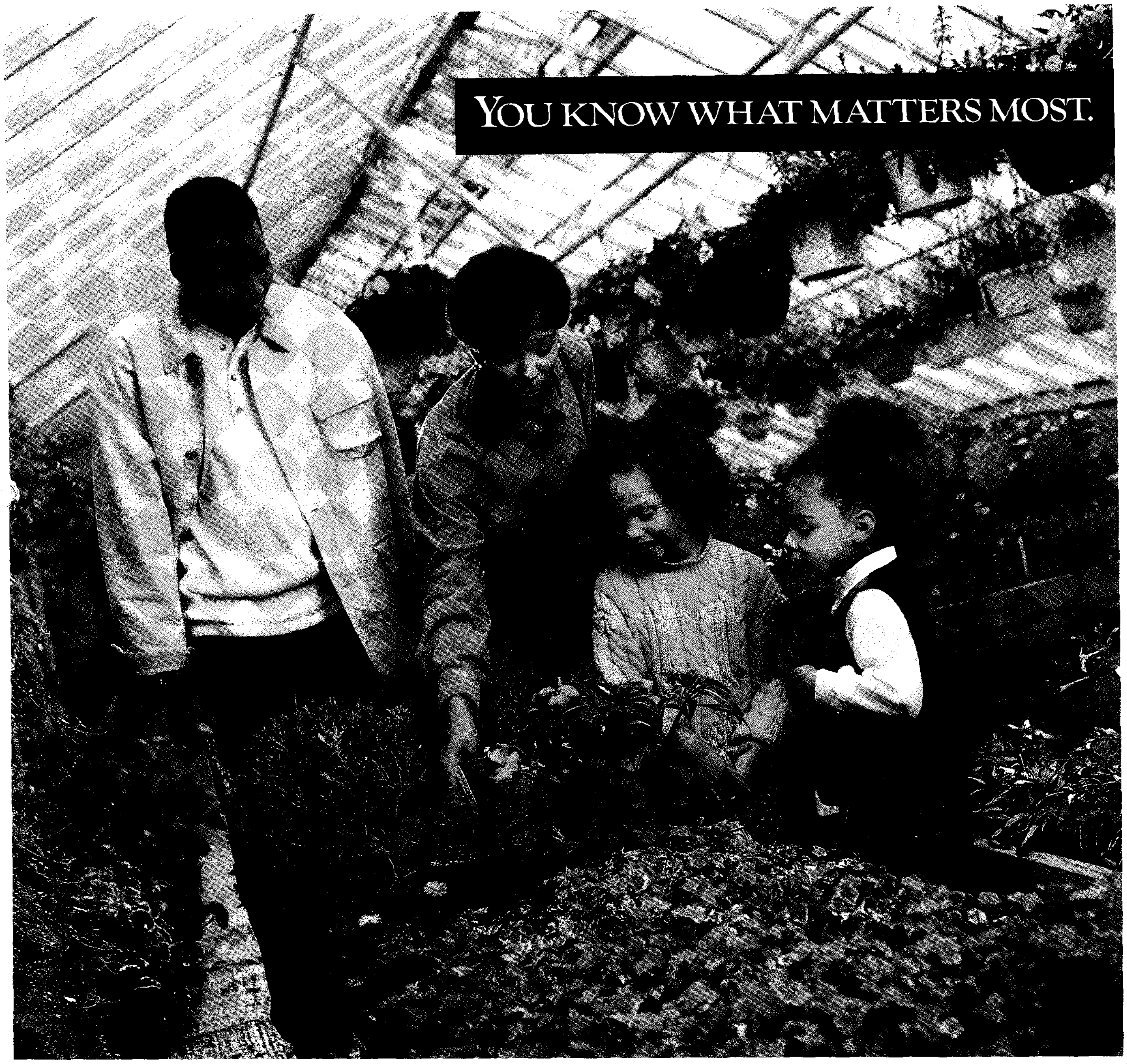
**TIME CAFÉ,** 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden within this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. Upstairs is a sumptuous Moroccan bar and lounge appointed with satin couches, mosaic tables, and Arabian-style fixtures. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, Charles Mingus. On Sept. 18, a bright new band called the **HEALTH & HAPPINESS SHOW** will appear. The brainchild of singer/multi-instrumentalist James Mastro, formerly of the Bongos, and drummer St. Vincent DeNunzio, an ex-Feelie, the Show has just released a début album called "Tonic," featuring buoyant neo-country with a folkie edge. Dining.

**TRAMPS,** 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Thanks to low lighting, muraled pillars, ironwork, and a beautifully restored stamped-tin ceiling, this loft space manages to feel homey. Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main orders of business. Bluesman **SON SEALS** is here on Sept. 16. Loup Garou takes over on Sept. 17, and on Sept. 18 Nathan and the Zydeco Cha Chas. Dining.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD,** 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. **ART TAYLOR'S WAILERS** begin an engagement on Sept. 21. There are exhilarating moments when a great jazz drummer can transform the air around the bandstand into molten rhythm, and Taylor reaches those peaks more regularly than practically anyone else. His Wailers are invariably youthful, straight-out-of-the-gate hard boppers, whose enthusiasm is kept in check by Taylor's stringent concern for form. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.**

**VISIONES,** 125 Macdougal St., at Bleecker St. (673-5576)—A tiny, low-key supper club where the jazz, like the Spanish-American cuisine, can take on a spicy, multicultural flavor. On Sept. 21, the **MARTY EHRLICH** quartet plays. Is Marty Ehrlich the future of jazz? Maybe not, but wishful thinking can't hurt. The saxophonist's quartet makes some of the smartest music around. Ehrlich revels in the difficult elements of post-sixties jazz: modernist harmony, free jazz, impressionism, and counterpoint. His extraordinary band includes fellow-saxman Stan Strickland, drummer Bobby Previte, and bassist Michael Formanek. They're all serious players with virtually limitless resources.

**ZINNO,** 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: a place where you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. On Sept. 13-18: a trio featuring **JOHN BUNCH** on piano, **BUCKY PIZZARELLI** on guitar, and **JOHN WEBBER** on bass. Closed Sundays.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### EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

Our friend from Florence wanted to go everywhere at once. Ascending the steps to Flamingo East's balcony for its Wednesday-night salon, he marvelled at the size of the pre-Labor Day crowd. "They must all be on holiday," he reasoned, "just like me." When he was informed that this was not necessarily the case, he kept trying. "Ah, then all these people must be unemployed." He studied the mob. "They look like they don't work." Sorry. Meet the skinhead with the Che Guevara cap and the shoulder tattoo who was just hired to set up a new design division at Q.V.C. Meet the little guy with the baggy clothes and extra earrings who was just promoted at a graphics house called Doublespace, the photo rep in overalls, and the lawyer sporting dreadlocks.

Later, at a sleek new bar called NW3, a place that looks closed from the outside, our Italian friend was surprised to find a throng inside. At the next stop, the Tenth Street Lounge, he swore the women must be hanging out there for lack of gainful employment. A jewelry designer who overheard the remark almost slugged him. Finally, when he got to the door of Hades and spotted the patrons heading inside, he was sure he had triumphed. "There is no way that those people, with those nose rings and those clothes, could find a job anywhere." So he went ahead and asked a young woman near the entrance where she worked. "Here," she replied. "This place ain't free, you know."

### IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

**Reno**—The writer/comedian/performance artist is trying out new material in this engagement at P.S. 122. Not one to keep her thoughts to herself, Reno undoubtedly still has plenty to yap about—even though George Bush is long gone from the White House. (After all, Jesse Helms *is* still in the Senate.) (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Sept. 16-19 at 7:30. Through Sept. 26.)

**"Faith Healing"**—Jane Comfort's interpretation of "The Glass Menagerie" combines elements of modern dance and Kabuki theatre, among other disciplines, and features a roller-skating duet between Laura and the Gentleman Caller. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Sept. 15-18 at 8.)

**"The Cowboy Girl Show & Swap Meet"**—The performance artist Cowboy Girl, née Lisa Lerner, sings X-rated ditties, plays the ukulele, and stages puppet shows in something called the Indian Maiden Girl Playhouse Theatre. The audience is encouraged to bring along items to trade during the swap-meet part of the proceedings. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088. Mondays at 8. Through Sept. 27.)

**"The Circle Unbroken Is a Hard Bop"**—A reprise of the work by Sekou Sundiata that has been described as an "epistolary praise poem with music." Craig Harris composed the score and Rome Neal directed. (Nuyorican Poets Café, 236 E. 3rd St. 465-3167. Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Through Oct. 16.)

**"New Stuff"**—A program of recent choreography by Jason Childers ("Did She Cry Too Clearly?"), Heather Fenby ("More Dreams of the Sleeping Princess VI: Play with Fire Get Burned"), Niles Ford ("Confessions of a Black Man"), and Dor Green ("Nose and Boo Boo's Mother"). (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Sept. 16-19 at 9.)

## ART

### *Starships*

A young prodigal at large for almost a decade now, the painter Alexis Rockman is ever more technically demanding of himself, and ever more impenetrably boyish. While he has continued to favor Old Masterish veneers and a melodramatic darkness of tone, Rockman has long since veered away from the oblique symbolism for which he was first known while still in art school—and which was so heavily indebted to Ross Bleckner's early eighties work—in order to plow the fields of the perverse and fantastical. In recent years, Rockman has delivered himself of barnyard grotesques reminiscent of Brueghel and the Flemish Renaissance, and grand Jurassic landscapes, full of elaborately detailed evolutionist fantasies and vague allegorical portent.

With his new cycle of paintings (Gorney, 100 Greene Street; through October 9), the artist takes a more decisive plunge into science fiction. Inspired in part by the 1971 film "Silent Running," these works have as their theme the fate of earth's species, animal and botanical, as they are carried off through the solar system toward Saturn in a transparent spaceship-biosphere. In several small and midsize paintings, the details of the various habitats in this futuristic Noah's Ark are rendered with vivid, taxonomic clarity. But the pièce de résistance of the show, a big painting titled "Biosphere: Laboratory," is metaphorically less predetermined. Although its lurid depictions of botched experiments on animals and nightmarish products of genetic engineering seem to make the work a parable of scientific hubris, there are hints of insincerity. The astral vista is pure Bleckner, and the painting features references to other artists, including Sigmar Polke and Damien Hirst. "Biosphere: Laboratory" reminds us that the artist has a healthy sardonic-obnoxious streak: might this painting also be his illustrator's allegory of late-twentieth-century avant-garde art?

### MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**Metropolitan Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Versailles 1973: American Fashion on the World Stage." In the world of fashion, 1973 is the year America finally conquered European snobbery. This occurred, apparently, when five American designers (Bill Blass, Stephen Burrows, Halston, Anne Klein, and Oscar de la Renta) were invited to show their work alongside that of five of their French contemporaries, at the Palace of Versailles. The Americans stole the show with their innovative sportswear and "comfortable clothing for modern living." Twenty years later, the museum's new Costume Institute has re-created this historical moment, and also mounted several installations that explore American fashion before and after the event. . . . ¶ "Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper, Selections from the Collection" begins with works from the mid-thirties and early forties, when the move-

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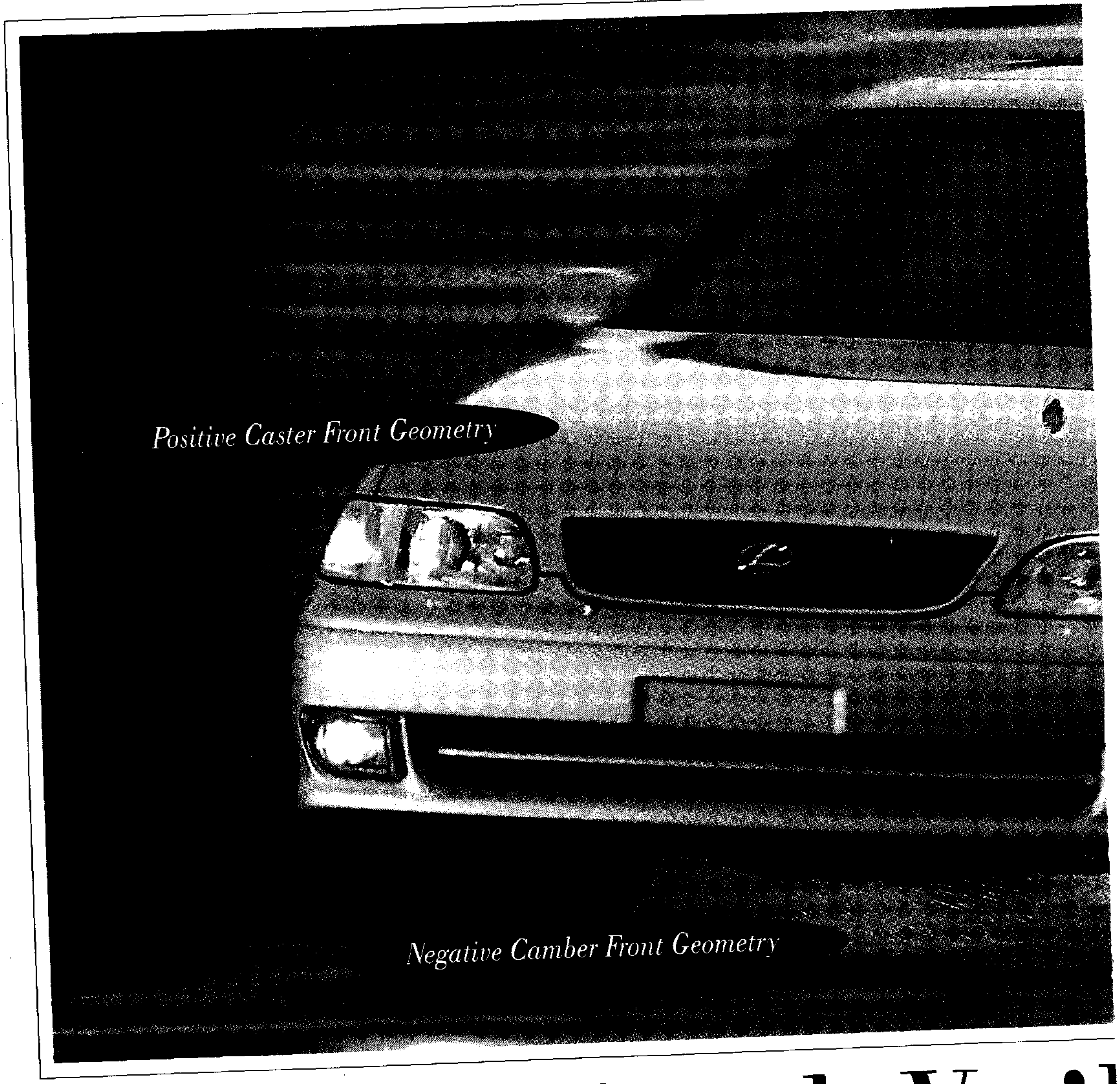
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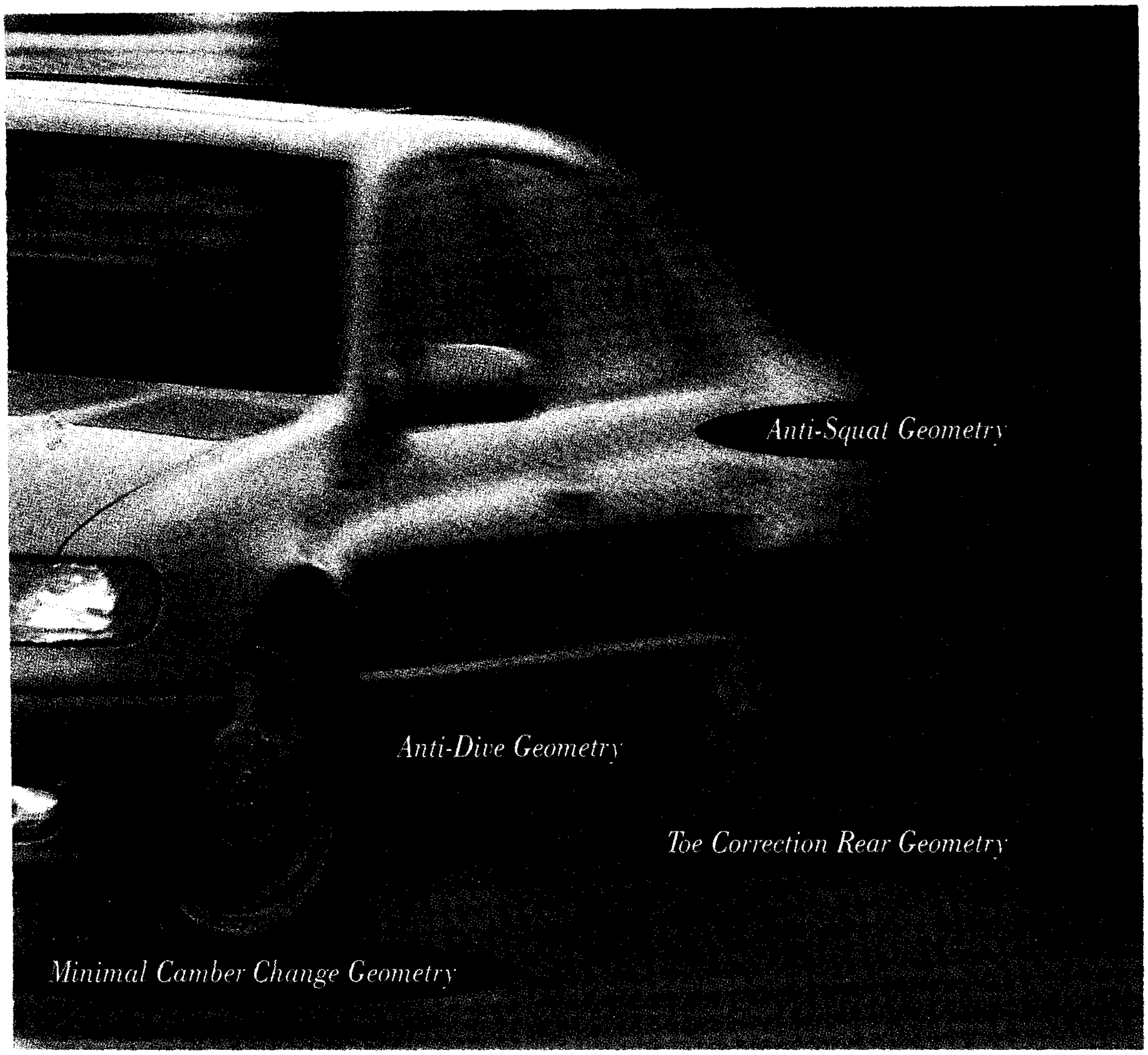
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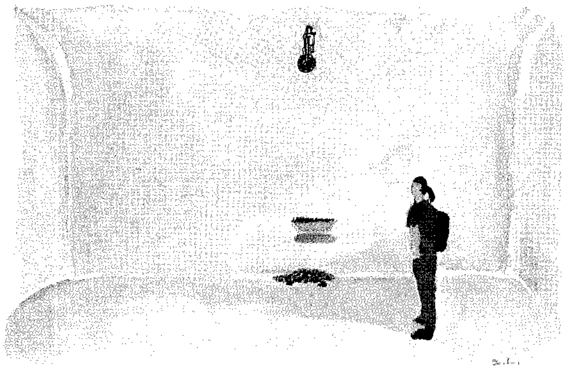
ART—Cont'd

ment hadn't yet taken shape or been named, and it leaves off with a few eclectic pieces from the mid-sixties, when the style itself had already filtered down through three generations. Highlights include exquisite early drawings by Barnett Newman, surprisingly intense work by de Kooning, and paintings by William Baziotes that should revive his reputation as a colorist. Several lesser-known practitioners also flourish on paper, most notably Anne Ryan, Gerome Kamrowski, and Philip Guston. . . . ¶ Verrocchio's magnificent sculpture "Christ and St. Thomas," a recently restored Medici commission completed in 1483, is currently on loan from a granary-cum-oratory in Florence. Through Oct. 17. . . . ¶ "Nineteenth-Century Portraits, Landscapes, and Nudes." . . . ¶ An exhibition of historic hand-colored baseball cards. . . . ¶ Forty examples of Persian tiles, from the twelfth century through the late nineteenth, in a snug, one-room exhibit. Through Oct. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.) . . . NOTE: The roof garden, featuring six large sculptures, a great view, and cappuccino, is open when weather permits.

**Museum of Modern Art,** 11 W. 53rd St.—A project by the Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco, who stood to inherit the great muralist canon but studiously avoided the bold muscularity, color, and drama of that tradition. Orozco's project, which consists of works scattered about and beyond the museum in a sort of hide-and-seek vein, is nothing if not subtle: "New Ultra," a detergent cap affixed to a column at the top of the second-floor escalator, could easily be overlooked; from the evidence, "Home Run," made up of oranges placed in the windows of buildings on 54th Street, facing the Sculpture Garden, may have been eaten. Even one of the more forthright works, "Hammock Hanging Between Two Skyscrapers," in the Sculpture Garden, reveals Orozco's ironic touch: the "skyscrapers" are two grand London plane trees. . . . ¶ "Multiple Images: Photographs since 1965 from the Collection" features work by Jan Groover, Sol LeWitt, Duane Michals, and Charles Ray. Through Sept. 28. . . . ¶ "Pastime in Prints" includes more than seventy depictions of leisure and outdoor activity by fifty artists, from Degas to Picasso to Hopper. Through Sept. 28. . . . ¶ A "sculptural video" installation by John Sturgeon. . . . ¶ "Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper: Selections from the Design Collection." Twenty objects, including televisions, appliances, and chairs, all designed between 1959 and 1978. . . . ¶ Fifteen large-scale linoleum-block prints by Chuck Close of his friend and fellow-artist Alex Katz. Close compares his complicated creative process to recording a song by performing it on separate tracks and then mixing the tracks for the final version. The result here is a riveting portrait series in which every aspect of Katz's face—furrowed brow, dark stare, large nose set off by deep parentheses, slack mouth with clenched teeth—is painfully magnified, and they all come together in a poignant totality. Through Sept. 28. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursday and Friday evenings until 8:30, with no admission charge after 5:30.)



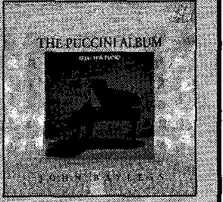
*Rebecca Horn at the Guggenheim.*

STEPHEN LACK

**Guggenheim Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum presents Rebecca Horn, a German artist whose work incorporates all manner of objects, from feathers to pistols to mercury—everything except old-fashioned paint and canvas. . . . ¶ Two floors below but light-years apart, "Modern Masterpieces from the Permanent Collection," which includes paintings by Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, Mondrian, Miró, and Picasso, is reassuring evidence that fine art still lives. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

**Guggenheim Museum SoHo,** 575 Broadway—More than seventy paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints by Paul Klee (1879-1940). Through Oct. 31. . . . ¶ "Singular Dimensions in Painting," an exhibit of minimalist work, primarily from the fifties and sixties. . . . ¶ A site-specific installation by Rebecca Horn. Through Oct. 1. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 8.)

**Whitney Museum of American Art,** Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A thirty-year retrospective featuring more than fifty paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings by Vija Celmins: deceptively simple monochromatic seascapes, evening skies, and lunar surfaces. Opens Sept. 16. . . . ¶ "Hand-Painted Pop" includes early works by Rauschenberg, Johns, Warhol, and Rosenquist, and by such less well known artists as Jean Follett and Jess. Through Oct. 10. . . . ¶ "In the Spirit of Fluxus," a carefully thought-out and handsomely installed exhibition of art and incunabula by the far-flung practitioners of this international neo-Dada non-movement. Through Oct. 3. . . . ¶ "Hopper



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John Bayless: Whose rules? Certainly not Puccini's. Great music was traditionally scored for improvisations. I went further. Besides, it's my way of sharing in his passion, his honesty. Of course I'm playing Puccini, but not just the vocal parts. I'm playing the whole thing, the orchestra, the solos, the libretto (you can never lose sight of those great stories) ...even imaginary scenery, from my heart! In fact, much of the work is inspired by images that come to me from the music; I like to think of it as "painting with the piano." So naturally, I'm also playing Bayless like you've never heard him before.

AR: *How does it differ from your other records?*

JB: You can't really compare them. This is a whole different set of challenges. Now I'm working with my favorites from *Tosca, La Bohème, Madama Butterfly* and a few others. With a single piano, I'm trying to draw an audience deeper into the music of Puccini, no matter how much they love opera, or how little. That's my job. That's what I do. I even try to imagine how an audience would react. That's why I love endings. It's when people applaud.

AR: *Would Puccini himself applaud ARIAS FOR PIANO?*

JB: Oh, I would hope so. I mean...I didn't know the man! But still, I like to think that we've had several long conversations, through the medium of the music itself....

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in Paris'' consists of twenty-five works that Hopper painted in the early nineteen-hundreds. Through Oct. 3. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

**American Museum of Natural History,** Central Park W. at 79th St.—''The Hall of Human Biology and Evolution,'' a permanent exhibition. . . . ¶ Cuba, as seen in photographs, drawings, and specimens, including the skull of a previously unknown species of monkey. . . . ¶ ''Bears: Imagination and Reality.'' Through Oct. 3. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**Brooklyn Museum,** Eastern Parkway—''The Second Dimension: Twentieth-Century Sculptors' Drawings.'' More than seventy-five works from the museum's permanent collection, including figure drawings by Louise Nevelson and Isamu Noguchi. Through Sept. 19. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

**American Craft Museum,** 40 W. 53rd St.—Organized as part of an ongoing Master Artist series, ''Gertrud and Otto Natzler: Collaborations/Solitude'' showcases the elegant contributions to twentieth-century ceramics of this husband-and-wife team. Through Oct. 10. . . . ¶ ''Edible Drawings'' by John Cage. Experiments in handmade paper by the late composer. Through Oct. 10. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

**Cooper-Hewitt Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—''Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office.'' This lighthearted exhibition examines the traditional link between ''women's work'' and home and office appliances. Telling contraptions and vintage advertisements are on display: classic telephones and washing machines in kitschy pastels; anthropomorphic ironing boards and eroticized toasters; impossibly sexist copy, such as a 1966 electric-mixer ad (''I love being whipped by my Dormeyer'') and a 1962 Frigidaire ad that promises ''A good washer is like a good man.'' (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

**Jewish Museum,** 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St.—''From the Inside Out'' showcases eight contemporary international artists, including Christian Boltanski and Nancy Spero. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

**Morgan Library,** 29 E. 36th St.—An exhibition of five centuries' worth of French drawings and prints, from Cézanne to Redon. Opens Sept. 15. . . . ¶ The library celebrates the birthdays of two classics: Saint-Exupéry's ''The Little Prince'' and Beatrix Potter's ''Peter Rabbit.'' On view are early manuscripts, various editions, photographs, illustrations, and other memorabilia. Opens Sept. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

**Museum for African Art,** 593 Broadway—''Home and the World: Architectural Sculpture by Aboudramane and Bodys Isek Kingelez.'' Aboudramane, who hails from the Ivory Coast but lives in Paris, creates bright-colored, often fantastical structures—one of his buildings has horns. Kingelez, who is from Zaire, combines urban African design with international architecture. Through Sept. 26. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8.)

**Museum of American Folk Art,** Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—''Driven to Create: The Anthony Petullo Collection of Self-Taught and Outsider Art.'' ''Outsider'' is the current euphemism for art work by mental patients. This show of more than a hundred paintings and works on paper, from the nineteen-twenties to the present, examines the unusual vision of these ''outsiders'' and other self-taught ''aesthetic mavericks'' whose work is independent of the mainstream art world. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

**Museum of the City of New York,** Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—''Building Bridges'' features work in various mediums by five Japanese artists living in New York. . . . ¶ ''Presents of the Past'' showcases recent gifts to the museum, from Tiffany silver to a painted Puerto Rican crucifix. Through Oct. 5. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

**National Academy of Design,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—''American Treasures.'' Nineteenth-century paintings from the museum's permanent collection. Through Sept. 29. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

**The New Museum,** 583 Broadway—''Trade Routes'' features nineteen artists whose work explores the globalization of trade and culture. . . . ¶ ''Testimonio,'' a collaborative installation by and about Latin Americans living in New York that includes mural paintings, works on paper, and photography. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

**New York Public Library,** Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—''Dandies and Decadence: British Writers at the Turn of the Century'' includes first editions, illustrations, and manuscripts from the library's Berg Collection. Through Sept. 25. . . . ¶ ''Self-Evidence: Self-Portraits in Prints and Photographs.'' (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5:45.)

**New York Public Library for the Performing Arts,** Lincoln Center—The library devotes its entire exhibition space to ''Jazz,'' with more than four hundred original scores and arrangements, rare manuscripts, film footage, photographs from the forties to the sixties, and radio broadcasts from the thirties. Through Sept. 30. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

**Queens Museum of Art,** Flushing Meadow Park—''Ante América'' (''Regarding America'') includes work in mixed mediums by more than twenty African, Caribbean, and Native American artists. Through Sept. 26. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

## GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

*(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with shows opening this week.)*

**Alexander Calder** (1898-1976)—Slightly overshadowed at the Guggenheim's ''Picasso and the Age of Iron'' show last spring, Calder is now the subject of a solo exhibition in a venue perfectly suited to large-scale metal sculpture. Calder's best work, particularly his familiar mobiles, balances cumbersome shapes with an almost floral delicacy; his stabiles often suggest sea creatures at rest. This exhibition offers one of each: a mobile from 1957 and a stabile from 1964, both never before exhibited in New York. Opens Sept. 18. Through Oct. 30. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

**Craig Fisher**—Large raw canvases that have been stained, spotted, and drawn on. Opens Sept. 18. Through Oct. 23. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

**Allan Graham**—Door panels painted and detailed with boreholes, hinges, and peepholes. Opens Sept. 18. Through Oct. 13. (Fawbush, 76 Grand St.)

**Jonathan Lasker**—Recent large-scale works with contrasting surfaces and thickly painted marks. Opens Sept. 18. Through Oct. 23. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

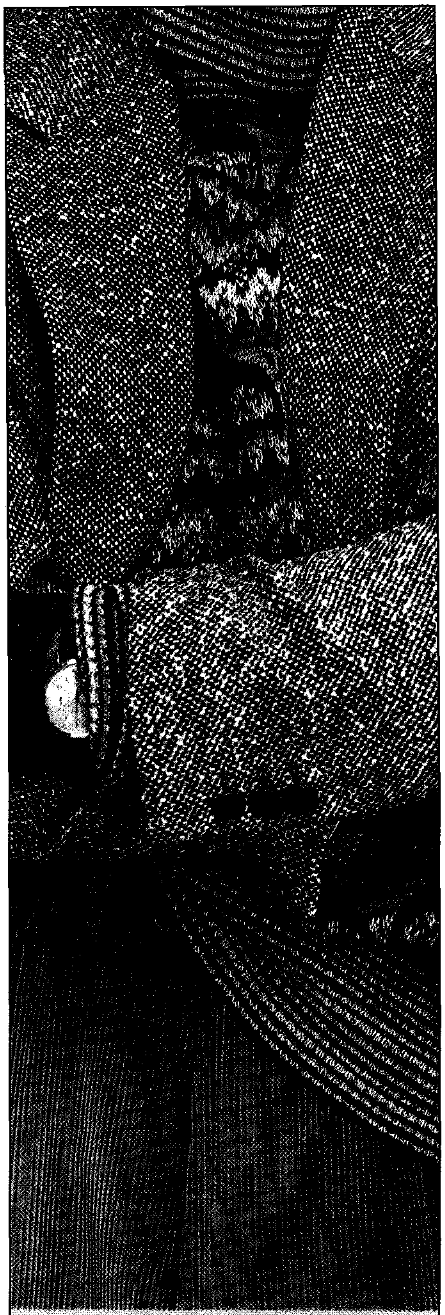
**Louise Nevelson** (1900-88)—The artist's last metal assemblage sculpture. Opens Sept. 18. Through Oct. 16. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

**Gary Simmons**—Thirteen large paintings of target scopes and text, plus—and a big plus, at that—eight hundred and fifty Polaroids, taken at festivals and street fairs in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Harlem, of people posed in front of the paintings. Opens Sept. 18. Through Oct. 23. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

**"Comic Power"**—More than seventy-five underground and independent comic-book artists showing work from the past thirty years. Opens Sept. 18. Through Oct. 30. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

**"Personal Imagery, Chicago/New York"**—Nine artists from each city, who work with imagery as opposed to abstraction. Opens Sept. 18. Through Oct. 30. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

**"Gone Beyond Gone"**—Three new installations by Les Levine, Osvaldo Romberg, and Nancy Spero in collaboration with Abe Frajndlich.



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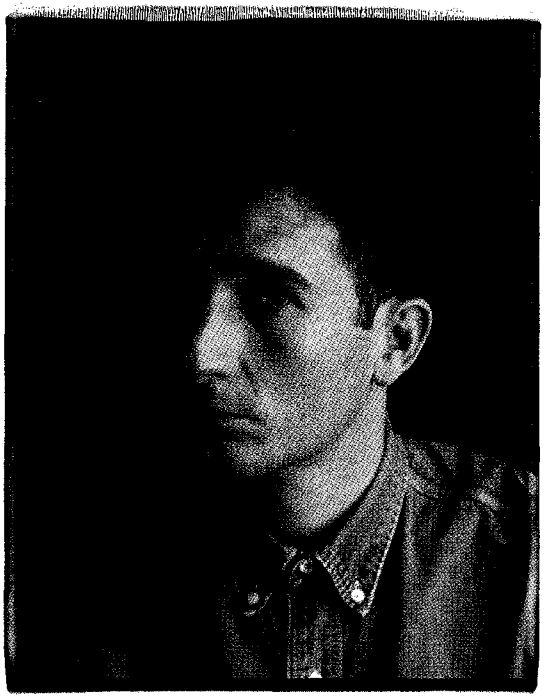
*The curator feels they are "going in different directions with completely different stylistic approaches."* Opens Sept. 18. Through Oct. 23. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway.)

•

**Peter Nadin**—Conceptual painting may be a dead end, but the poet and painter Peter Nadin continues to flesh out the halting thought processes behind the act of representation with refreshing subtlety and verve. Characteristically, his canvases seem deliberately unfinished, as if the painter might return to them at any moment to make further erasures and emendations. Words and images both have the same palpably material presence. "The Apostate's Cross," perhaps the most ambitious work in this show, presents a dilemma of faith no less artistic than religious. Nadin produces a giddy collision of painterly styles, contrasting the cool, almost Hockneyesque blues and whites of a swimming pool with an extravagantly brushy sky above. His mixture of personal and traditional symbolism is striking, but the real drama of these paintings comes from the tension between the febrile intensity of his brushwork and the dreamy melancholy of his images. Through Oct. 9. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)



*Self-portrait by Michael David (Knoedler).*

**Carl Andre**—Poems that are not unrelated to his minimalist sculptures: e.g., "dead brown owl/dead brown owl/on the gravel/on the road/at the pit/at the meadows/dead brown girl brown/wing under head, lounging." Through Oct. 8. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

**Fernando Botero**—Sculpture and drawings on canvas. Through Nov. 6. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.) . . . NOTE: Botero's corpulent bronze figures can be seen on Park Avenue from 54th to 61st Sts. Through Nov. 14.

**Gregory Botts**—Landscapes revealing a nostalgia for the mythology of the American West. Through Oct. 9. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

**Helene Brandt**—Architectonic steel sculptures of evolutionary forms. Through Oct. 16. (Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St.)

**Squeak Carnwath**—Big translucent paintings incorporating color-coördinated words. "What Is Blue," for example, has layers of blue and contains a list of things that can be blue, such as Mondays, water, and blood. Through Oct. 2. (Ledisflam, 130 Prince St.)

**Viola Frey**—Monumental ceramic figures, plus a twenty-five-foot-long tile wall with figures tumbling across it. Through Oct. 20. (Hoffman, 429 W. Broadway.)

**Roni Horn**—A new sculpture installation, "When Dickinson Shut Her Eyes," in which each line of an Emily Dickinson poem is cast in an aluminum-and-plastic bar and propped upright against the wall. (They read vertically.) Through Oct. 30. (Boone, 417 W. Broadway.)

**Peter Hristoff**—Paintings by a New York artist whose Turkish heritage is evident in his work's imagery, sense of color, and small scale. Through Oct. 9. (Beitzel, 102 Prince St.)

**Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid**—"Death and Immortality," two installations by these self-styled instigators. The first is a series of paintings about a fictional suicide in a New Jersey motel room; the second consists of a number of proposals in the form of maquettes for the reuse of totalitarian monuments in the former U.S.S.R. Through Oct. 16. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.) . . . NOTE: Drawings, sketches, photographs, and written proposals by an international cast of a hundred and fifty artists, invited by Komar and Melamid to envision the future of Soviet monuments, are on view in the Courtyard Gallery, at the World Financial Center. Through Oct. 3.

**Mark Millof**—Millof squeezes tube after tube of paint on canvas to create a mostly monochromatic, thickly textured surface. Through Oct. 9. (Stux, 163 Mercer St.)

**Kathy Muehlemann**—Grisaille paintings with scarified surfaces. Through Oct. 13. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

**Soren**—Soren, a former dissident artist from Moscow, is now preoccupied with a series of paintings of New York, where he currently lives. Through Oct. 16. (Stephen Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St.)

**Andrew Spence**—Bold abstract paintings in luminous colors. Through Oct. 16. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

**Alan Uglow**—Paintings and three-dimensional forms. Through Oct. 9. (Stark, 594 Broadway.)

**Robert Yarber**—Yarber seems to be drawn to the effects of natural and artificial light merging over resort-moderne buildings and suburban landscapes. In some of his best new paintings, such as an untitled nocturnal vision of Rome's futuristic hillside Hilton, Yarber's cool eye is trained upon Italian venues—and on postwar Italian life and leisure on the American plan. The showstealer is a painterly Italian scene called "Séance," in which a group of Peter Arno people in a De Chiricoesque setting hold hands and levitate under an electrified evening sky. Through Oct. 9. (Sonnabend, 420 W. Broadway.)

**"Early Minimal Art"**—Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Robert Mangold, et al. Through Oct. 9. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

**"Seven Miles a Second"**—A collaborative comic book by the late David Wojnarowicz and James Romberger, which describes the arc of Wojnarowicz' life, from his youth as a hustler on the streets of New York to a maturity shadowed by the quotidian horrors of AIDS. The rough and seedy style of Romberger's illustrations provides a perfect foil for Wojnarowicz' text. Through Oct. 9. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

**"The Medium Is the Medium"**—Twelve artists whose work focusses on the process or the material. Through Oct. 9. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

**Willem de Kooning / Jean Dubuffet** (1901-85)—A show juxtaposing the late works of both artists: de Kooning's ribbon paintings and Dubuffet's less well known linear paintings. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 16. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

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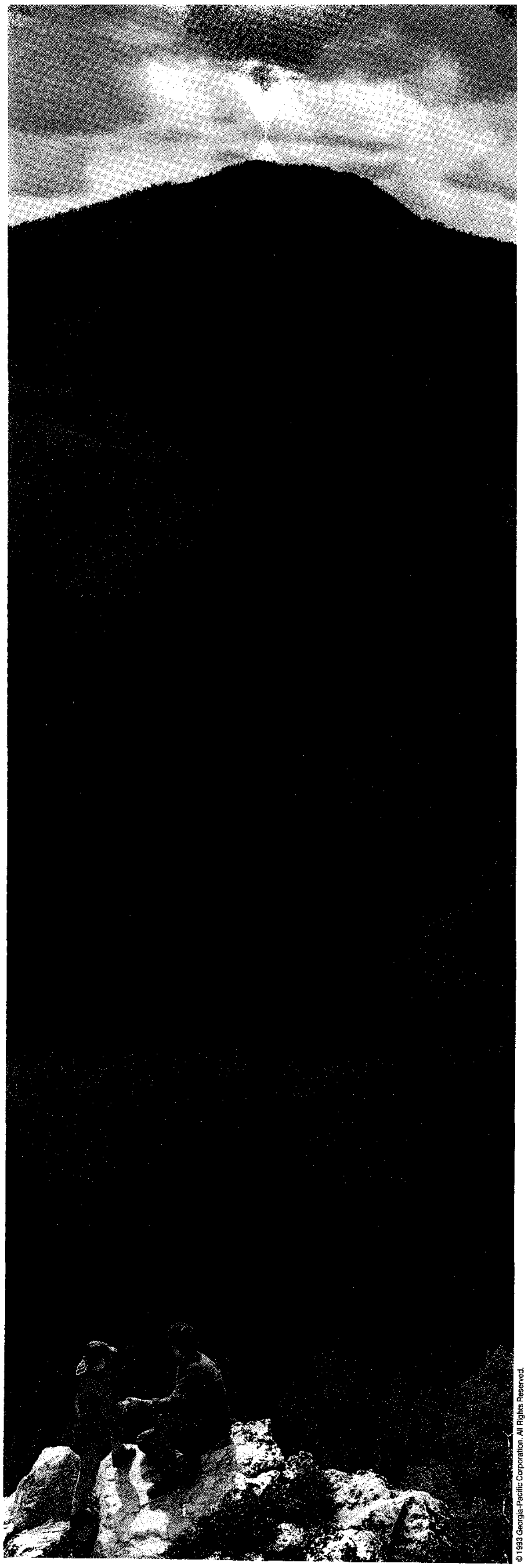

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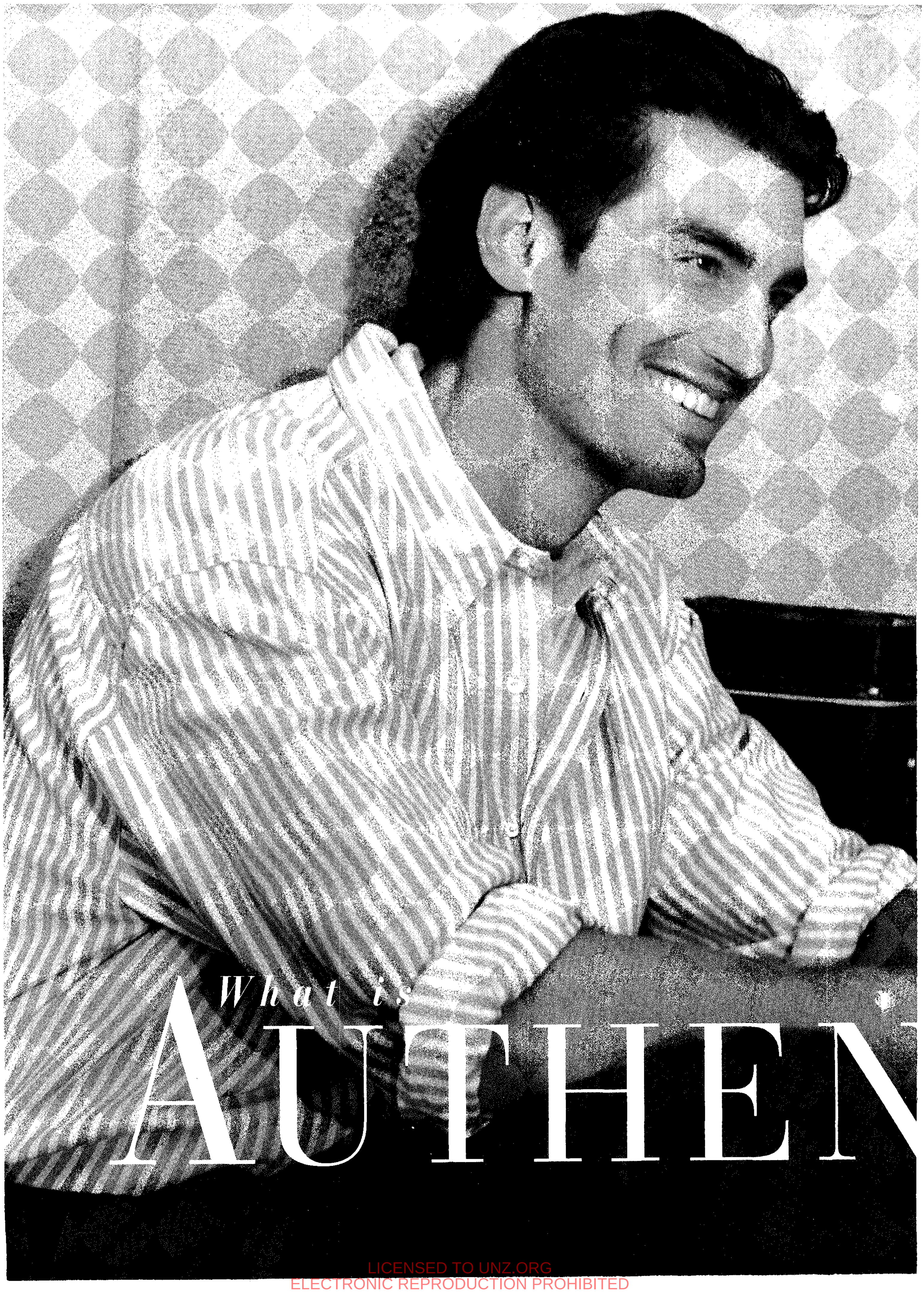
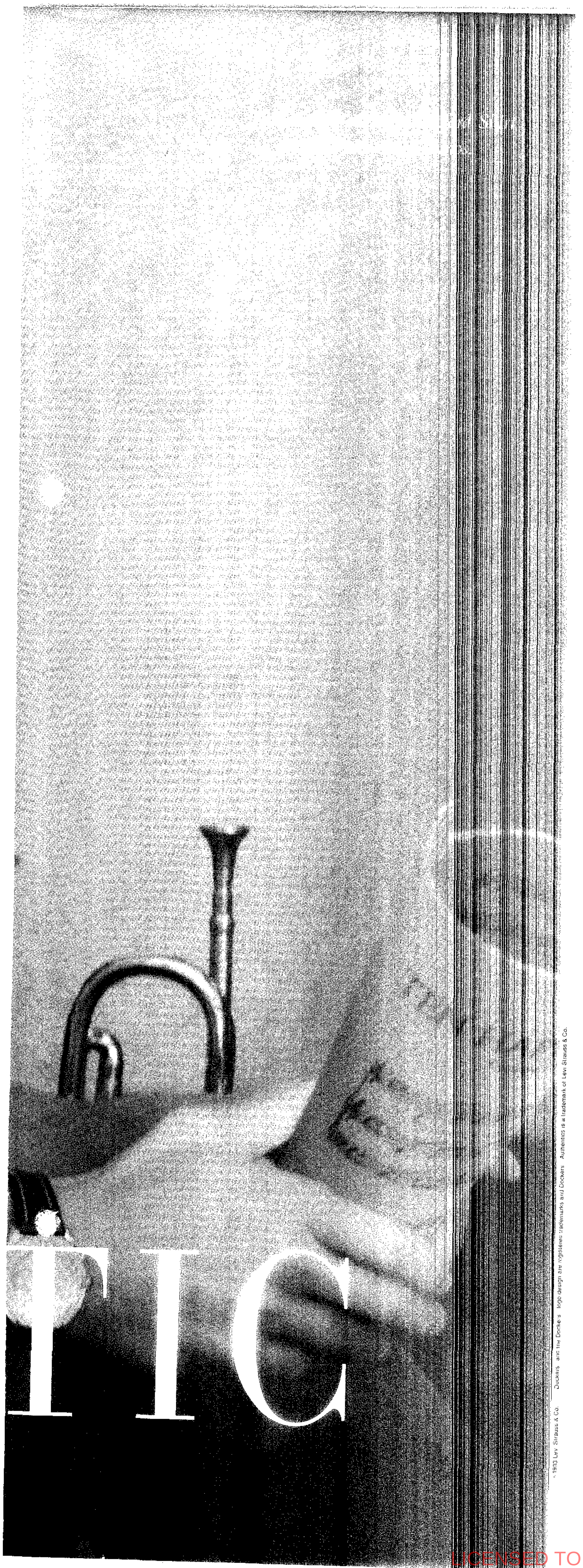


# *What is* AUTHEN



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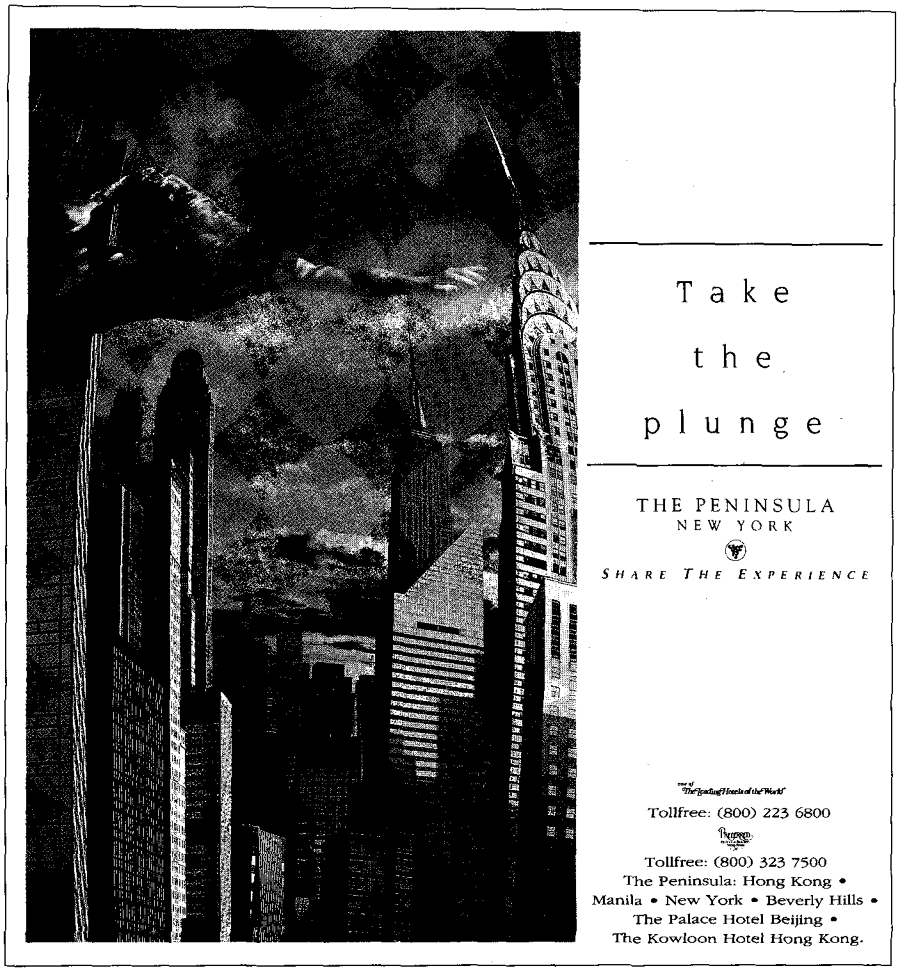
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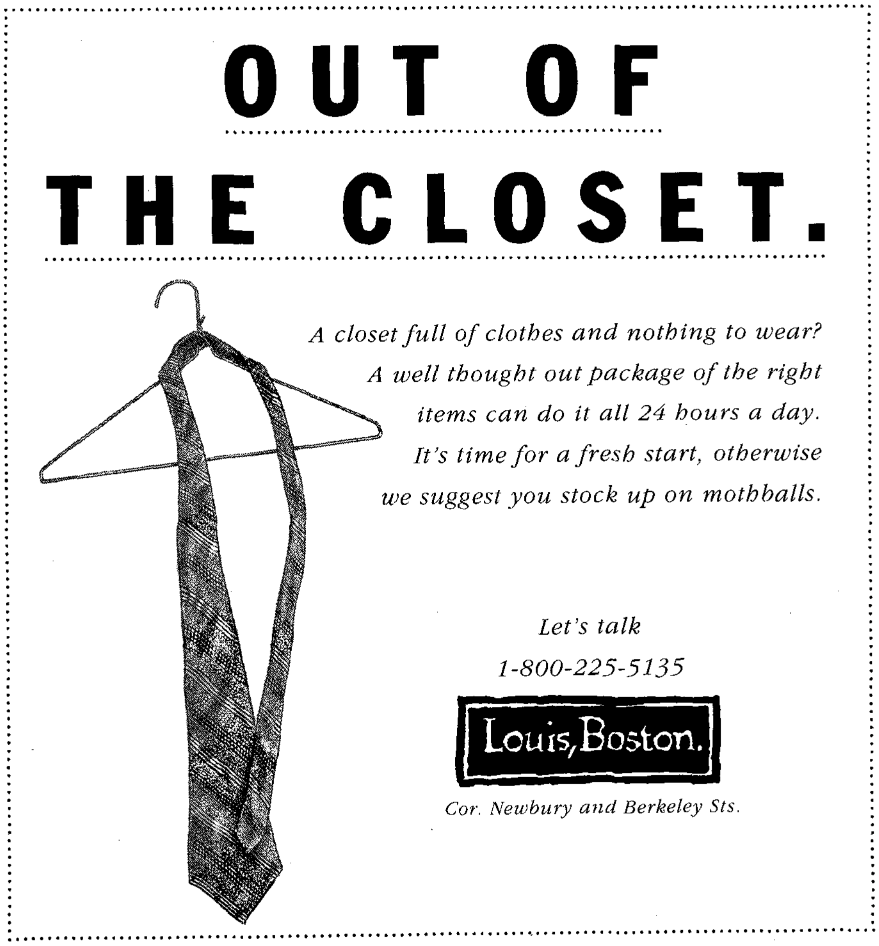
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ART—Cont'd

**Francisco Goya** (1746-1828)—A proof set of eighty etchings from 1799, revealing Goya's experimental printmaking techniques and satirical leanings. Opens Sept. 15. Through Nov. 7. (Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Schermerhorn Hall, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Wednesdays through Saturdays, 1 to 5.)

**Markus Lüpertz**—Drawings and large paintings by this German artist, of a male face in roughly abstract variations. Opens Sept. 16. Through Oct. 30. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

**Grégoire Müller**—Recent portraits by this Swiss artist. Opens Sept. 16. Through Oct. 30. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

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**Hannelore Baron** (1926-87)—Collages and box constructions incorporating found materials, made between 1970 and 1987. Through Oct. 16. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Michael Bergt**—A Santa Fe artist who uses that age-old and most delicate of mediums egg tempera but applies it to up-to-date subject matter. Through Oct. 9. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

**Herman Cherry** (1909-92)—A two-gallery show of abstract paintings. Through Oct. 2. (Dintenfass and Ross, 50 W. 57th St.)

**Michael David**—A new "Wolfen Series"—paintings exploring the notion of "werewolf." Through Oct. 7. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

**Louise Fishman**—Abstract paintings. Through Oct. 9. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Andy Goldsworthy**—Photos of this Scottish artist's site-specific works (with leaves, bark, thorns, sticks, pebbles) in Pennsylvania, Illinois, and New York's Central Park, plus some leaf sculptures and installations. Through Oct. 16. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

**George Harkins**—Monumental watercolors of forests in the Catskills and the Champlain Valley, done in the artist's Tribeca studio. Through Oct. 2. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

**Asger Jorn** (1914-73) / **Fridel Dzubas**—Paintings from 1940 to 1972 by the Danish co-founder of the Cobra movement. / Paintings from the sixties through the early eighties, the period of the artist's color-field work. Through Sept. 25. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Robert Kulicke**—Kulicke, who is known for his still-lifes, is as concerned with what supports a painting as with the painting itself. The exhibition includes twenty-five precise replicas of twelfth- to seventeenth-century frames. And, in order not to upstage the frames, he has used mirrors in place of paintings. Through Oct. 9. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

**Holly Lane**—A young California artist who paints idiosyncratic narratives mounted in classic panelled frames. Through Oct. 9. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Alexander Liberman**—Circle paintings. Through Oct. 2. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

**André Masson** (1896-1987)—Paintings and drawings. Through Oct. 9. (Cavaliero, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Gerhard Richter**—The first show of paintings in three years by this German artist, who continues his investigation of the abstract. (There is also, surprisingly, one realistic floral work.) Through Oct. 23. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

**Peter Saul**—A mini-retrospective that ranges from the "Electric Chair" paintings of the sixties to a current Pop series. Through Oct. 16. (Frumkin/Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

**Anthony Viti**—Paintings reflecting gay concerns, incorporating a motif from a Marsden Hartley painting: a cruciform intended as an elegy to a lover lost in the Second World War. Through Oct. 2. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

**Jamie Wyeth**—"Islands": paintings from the past thirty years of Monhegan Island and Southern Island, where the artist is the sole resident. Through Oct. 9. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

**"New York, New York"**—Paintings, drawings, watercolors, and prints produced in the city between 1850 and 1950. Through Oct. 30. (York, 21 E. 65th St. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

**"The Bestiary"**—Animals in contemporary art by Gregory Crewdson, Dennis Oppenheim, Alexis Rockman, and others. Through Oct. 2. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

### OTHER VENUES

**"Forty-second Street Art Project"**—The Forty-second Street Development project and Creative Time, a nonprofit organization for public art, have invited twenty-four artists and teams to decorate the largely vacant stretch of Forty-second Street west of Seventh Avenue. Most of the artists have endeavored to integrate their projects with the environment, so that they are neither clearly art nor clearly urban accident. Some visitors may be reminded of the Times Square Show of 1980, in which the artists' collective Colab took over an abandoned massage parlor and filled it with socially conscious art that tried its best to blend in. One of that show's key organizers, John Ahearn, an artist with a profound sense of social conscience, brings the same populist flavor, matured, back to the 'hood for the remainder of the summer. He and his collaborator, Rigoberto Torres, have taken up shop in one of the strip's abandoned storefronts and are making their vibrant painted plaster busts of the people who are hanging out. The Ahearn/Torres busts remain among the most penetrating of contemporary realist art but are usually seen only in their finished form. Here one has the opportunity to observe the process and, in so doing, to have some mystifying art demystified. Through Oct. 31.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

### *Past Perfect*

Yet another exhibition dealing with the theme of sexuality opens this week, but it's a show whose origins and timing make it a kind of milestone of exchange between the social sciences and the arts. New York University's Grey Art Gallery (33 Washington Place; through October 30) is presenting a selection of the work of George Platt Lynes (1907-55), a successful fashion, dance, and portrait photographer who also created a large body of work related to his own homosexuality. This show owes its existence to an unusual source: all but one of the photographs are from the archives of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, whose founder recognized both the aesthetic and documentary value of Lynes's pictures.

This exhibition makes it clear that Lynes's daring and beauty-centered treatment of homosexuality has had an enormous, largely unacknowledged influence on contemporary photography. In his day, Lynes's frank eroticism and nudity made a portion of his work too shocking to be seen, and this show includes images that have never been on display before. (The photographer destroyed some of his own work near the end of his life, and it is speculated that a number of his negatives were burned after his death.) Even apart from the homosexuality, there are plenty of other pictures that break taboos. Lynes's portrait of Yul Brynner, for instance, is a full-frontal nude. As Wendell Walker, the gallery manager, puts it, "There's something unexpected about seeing the person you grew up watching in 'The King and I' just standing there nude like that. He was made to seem so nonsexual in that movie, and here he is with a penis, and *hair*."

James Crump and Thomas Sokolowski have curated a first-rate exhibition, a show that makes one grateful that these works have survived and found their public. A smaller show of Lynes's portraits can be seen, by appointment, at Linda Hyman Fine Arts (172 West 79th Street; through October 30), and a new book has just been published by Bulfinch Press.

**Nancy Burson**—An exhibition of haunting black-and-white prints of children with progeria (the aging disease). Through Oct. 19. (Baum, 588 Broadway.)

**Robert Doisneau**—More than fifty black-and-white photographs, from the thirties through the late seventies, and a series of fifteen celebrity portraits, of Colette, Giacometti, and Picasso, among others. Opens Sept. 15. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

**Eugène Druet** (1868-1916)—Photographs taken between 1900 and 1916 of the sculptor Auguste Rodin. Opens Sept. 16. (Sander, 19 E. 76th St.)

**Lewis W. Hine** (1874-1940)—Hine is best known for his harsh, realist photography, particularly his vintage work documenting Ellis Island, child labor, industrial squalor, and the construction of the Empire State Building. Through Nov. 13. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

**Chin-san Long**—The forty-six photographs here (mostly black-and-white, some sepia or blue), dating from 1933 to 1988, imitate traditional Chinese landscape, animal, and flower paintings, and represent Long's photographic application of a sixth-century theory of painting: add what's missing, remove what's superfluous. He calls them "composite pictures" and creates them by combining negatives. (Some appear to use drawing as well as photography.) Several achieve quintessentially Chinese manipulations of scale—for example, a toy house, a pebble, and a bit of dirt turn tiny twigs and fronds into towering trees. Long, who is a hundred and one and still working, began taking photographs at thirteen and was one of the first photojournalists in China. His career coincides with the history of photography in that country. Through Sept. 17. (Taipei, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 49th St.)

**Alfred Stieglitz** (1864-1946)—Photographs from the collection of Georgia O'Keeffe. Through Oct. 23. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

**Minayoshi Takada**—Twenty-six vintage nudes from 1947 to 1950. Through Sept. 18. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

**Neil Winokur**—More than eighty images on the theme of illness and loss. Through Oct. 16. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

**Robert Yarber**—Large-scale Cibachrome photographs of resorts and amusement parks. Through Oct. 9. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

**International Center of Photography,** 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Outside the Dream: Child Poverty in America." Seventy black-and-white works by photojournalist Stephen Shames. Through Sept. 26. . . . ¶ Collaborative Polaroids by artists and teen-agers from New York City. Through Sept. 26. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

**International Center of Photography Midtown,** Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—Opening-night, backstage, and production shots since 1893, celebrating Broadway's hundredth anniversary. Playwrights, stars, and composers include Tennessee Williams, Al Jolson, Fred Astaire, and George Gershwin. Through Oct. 3. . . . ¶ Fifty photographs by Rick Smolan, accompanied by interactive digital technology, documenting a journey through the Australian outback. Through Oct. 3. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

*(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the New York Public Library, and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.)*

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MOSCHINO

# MUSIC

## *Emily's Songs*

Any country's heritage in the art-song tradition depends to some degree on its lyric poetry, and the poet who has offered our composers most—in musicality of line and proportion, in the penetrating insights to which music can respond—may well be Emily Dickinson. A selection of recent settings of her verses is on offer September 17 and 19 from the mezzo-soprano Barbara Hess and the pianist Debra Torok at Synchronicity Space, on Mercer Street.

Dickinson's philosophical range is as wide as that of any of the great European poets of her century. In some ways, she is an American Heine, boiling emotion down to the smallest verses of thick concentration. (Camille Paglia, in a riveting chapter of "Sexual Personae," calls her "Amherst's Madame de Sade.") Yet a very large portion of her work has rung in composers' ears as sentimental nature poetry and love song. In the first decades after her death, composers, if they noticed the poems at all in their early, prettified editions, made little or nothing of them. She was a modernist-in-waiting. One of the most popular American song cycles, in the classical recital-song sense, is Aaron Copland's "Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson," by now a repertory piece. Ms. Hess's program will touch on only one of the Copland settings, featuring instead the less familiar efforts of Alice Parker, Vincent Persichetti, Walter Hilse, Gitta Steiner, David Irving, Martin Kalmanoff, and Richard Hoyt.

### OPERA

**New York City Opera**—**TURANDOT,** conducted by Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Sept. 16 at 8 and Sept. 19 at 1:30.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY,** conducted by Christopher Keene. (Sept. 17 at 8.) . . . **CARMEN,** conducted by Mr. Ajmone-Marsan. (Sept. 18 at 1:30.) . . . **THE MIKADO.** (Sept. 18 and Sept. 21 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

**Amato Opera Company**—Presenting "Madama Butterfly." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Sept. 18 at 7:30 and Sept. 19 at 2:30. Through Oct. 10.)

**Magic Circle Repertory Opera Ensemble**—Presenting two one-act operas, in a salon setting: Barber's "A Hand of Bridge" and Holst's "The Wandering Scholar." (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Sept. 19 at 6. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 876-6000.)

### ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**Sankt Annae Youth Choir**—A hundred teen-age singers from Copenhagen, directed by Michael Bojesen; also featuring organist William Trafka. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Sept. 19 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

**Bachanalia Festival Orchestra**—A conductorless chamber orchestra, performing Shostakovich's "Chamber Symphony," Bach's Third "Brandenburg" Concerto, Rossini's String Sonata No. 3, and Giovanni Bottesini's Grand Duo Concertante (for violin, double bass, and orchestra), as well as the première of Michael Moriarty's "Theme and Variations on 'I Wonder as I Wander,'" featuring violinist Nina Beilina. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Sept. 20 at 8.)

### RECITALS

**Bargemusic**—Until it was discontinued in 1989, the Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition stood apart from most musical competitions (with their standard-repertoire requirements) by mandating that contestants exhibit expertise in performing twentieth-century American music. The Canadian pianist Marc-André Hamelin won the competition in 1985, and since then has continued to champion American scores, especially those that make exorbitant technical demands. A case in point: Elliot Carter's Sonata for Cello and Piano (written in 1948), which he'll perform here with cellist Fred Sherry. Also on the program are Mozart's Trio in E-Flat Major (K. 542) and Ravel's Piano Trio, with violinist Carmit Zori completing the ensemble. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Sept. 16 at 7:30 and Sept. 19 at 4.)

**Barbara Hess**—Mezzo-soprano, with pianist Debra Torok, in a pair of programs. Sept. 16 and Sept. 18 at 8: Songs by Kurt Weill. . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 8 and Sept. 19 at 3: Contemporary song settings of Emily Dickinson poems. (Synchronicity Space, 55 Mercer St. 925-8645.)

**Marco Granados**—The flutist will be joined by a string trio to perform chamber works by Bach, Telemann, and others. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., the Bronx. Sept. 19 at 11:30 A.M. No tickets necessary, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

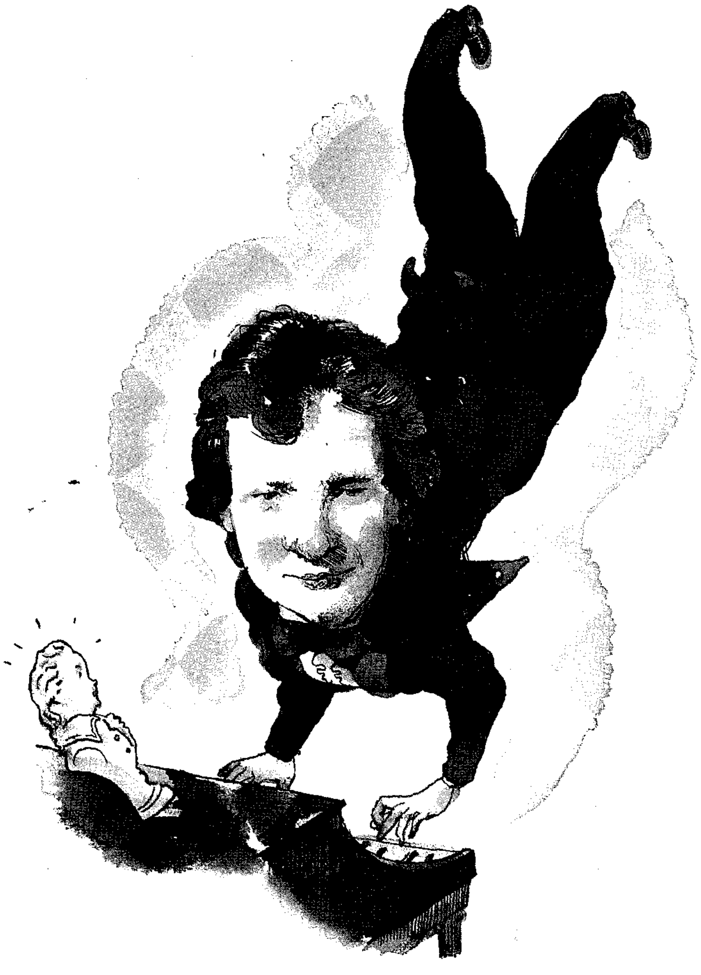
**Philip Ewart**—In turn-of-the-century America, the line separating parlor songs from art songs was thin indeed. Mr. Ewart, a baritone, will straddle it as he performs a recital that ranges through neglected but delicious fare by such composers as Sidney Homer (who was Samuel Barber's uncle), William Henry Squire, Arthur Foote, Arthur Penn, and others—in short, a stack of music that might have been piled on any number of parlor pianos in the first quarter of the century, before it was packed away to make room for the wireless. Jon Sherry accompanies. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Sept. 19 at 2:30. Admission by contribution.)

**Just Friends**—A vocal sextet, offering an eclectic classical-to-pop program; assisted by organist Timothy Smith, who will also perform solo works. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. Sept. 19 at 3. Admission by contribution.) . . . **NOTE:** The concert will be preceded at 2:30 by a recital on the church's carillon, performed by Joseph C. Davis.

**Kent Tritle**—The organist inaugurates a new Sunday-afternoon series centering on a much-lauded four-manual Mander organ that was installed last winter—an organ over which he presides during weekly services. He'll play works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Franck, Vierne, and Duruflé. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. Sept. 19 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

**David Buechner**—The pianist performs an hour-long recital comprising Mozart's A-Minor Sonata (K. 310), Dvořák's Four Piano Pieces (Op. 52), and Gershwin's "Five Foxtrots." (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. Sept. 20 at noon. Admission by contribution.)

**New Juilliard Ensemble**—The "old" Juilliard Ensemble was a legendary force in the modern-music scene twenty-five years ago: it was founded in 1968 by Luciano Berio (then a Juilliard professor) and Dennis Russell Davies (then a Juilliard student), and it premièred dozens of compositions before its energy dissipated in the mid-seventies. A new generation now revives its tradition and, overseen by Joel Sachs, will present a début program consisting of works by Colin Matthews, David Rakowski, Leon Kirchner, Stefano Gervasoni, and Ligeti. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Sept. 21 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)



*Marc-André Hamelin at Bargemusic.*

BARRY BLITT

### JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

**Bette Midler**—The Divine One settles in for the long haul. Laurence Olivier once said that not he but Bette Midler deserved to be called the Entertainer, and her new show gives no reason to disagree. Even the familiar trappings—bawdy stories, lots of "girls," mermaids in wheelchairs—have been given a fresh spin. Midler sings the expected ballads ("From a Distance," "Wind Beneath My Wings"), and you may hate yourself for letting them move you, but you'll feel better about the new material—more ballads, of course—and the classy older stuff. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Sept. 16-19 and Sept. 21 at 8. Through Oct. 23.)

**Depeche Mode**—A band whose success rests largely on the grand, machine-driven scores of songwriter Martin Gore and the gothic production methods of its various producers, Depeche Mode is a perfect

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studio unit. Its problem in live performances has been that bringing the wide-open sprawl of the arena stage into focus requires a little more hip-shaking energy than the band's music delivers. Their songs are dark and moody, and at their best they produce a hypnotic interplay of rhythm and electronic textures that ekes out a subtle aura of languor. Lead singer David Gahan tries his best to pump some cheery, wiggling life into the proceedings, but these are not songs to dance to. They are "Songs of Faith and Devotion"—just as the title of their latest album says they are—and a cool, muted presentation may be as good as it's going to get. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Sept. 21 at 7:30.)

**Grateful Dead**—A Grateful Dead concert is an institution old enough and strangely American enough to warrant an exhibit at the Smithsonian. It's a movable Chautauqua, a portable Mardi Gras, a temporary city where any evening of the week can be the weirdest Saturday night of your life. Each show is a gamble: will the music lift off toward ecstasy or meander and noodle through the swamps of repetition? Either way, the bumper sticker is correct: There is nothing like a Grateful Dead concert. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 16-18 and Sept. 20-22 at 7:30.)

**Meat Loaf**—Hudson Theatre, 145 W. 44th St. 307-7171. Sept. 17-18 and Sept. 20-21 at 8:30.

**Patricia Kaas**—The French cabaret singer. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Sept. 21 at 8.)

**"Interpretations" Concert**—Compositions by Bun-Ching Lam and Peter Gordon. (Merkin Concert Hall. Sept. 21 at 8.)

## SPORTS

### HOME TEAMS

**Mets**—Vs. the Philadelphia Phillies, Sept. 15 at 7:40.

**Yankees**—Vs. the Boston Red Sox, Sept. 16-17 at 7:30 and Sept. 18-19 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Minnesota Twins, Sept. 21 at 7:30.

**Giants**—Vs. the Los Angeles Rams, Sept. 19 at 1.

**Jets**—Away until Sept. 26, when they'll face the New England Patriots.

*(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000; and the Jets and the Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8222.)*

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**Homecoming**—Poet Derek Walcott will co-direct, with Gregory Doran, who directed the current Royal Shakespeare Company production, a staged reading of his adaptation of Homer's Odyssey. Irene Worth and Roscoe Lee Browne will take the roles of Athena and the narrator in this North American première. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Sept. 20 at 8.)

**Bookish**—Madame Librarian Marion would be in Heaven. On Sept. 17-19, during New York Is Book Country, bookstores, libraries, publishing houses, and independent presses will fête the printed word. A partial schedule of free events: Blair Brown, Calvin Trillin, Kurt Vonnegut, and Tama Janowitz, among others, will give a progressive reading of the whole of the late Laurie Colwin's soon-to-be-published novel, "A Big Storm Knocked It Over." (Sept. 17 at 7: Three Lives & Company, 154 W. 10th St. . . . Sept. 18 at 5:30: Books & Co., Madison Ave. at 74th St. . . . Sept. 19 at 3: Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St.) . . . ¶ Silence will be golden on the steps of the New York Public Library, for a read-in. Bring your own book. (Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Sept. 18 at 2.) . . . ¶ Derrick Bell, Walter Dean Myers, and others will discuss "African-Americans and the Right to Read and Publish." (Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St. Sept. 18 at 4.) . . . ¶ The main event: the fifteenth annual street fair, with more than a hundred and fifty publishers, booksellers, and independent presses displaying their wares. (Fifth Ave. between 48th and 57th Sts. Sept. 19, from 11 to 5.)

**Suds Studs**—For working stiffs who can't catch the weekday soaps, the Konica Soap Star Fanfest will provide opportunities to see some of the genre's most popular stars, including Michael E. Knight, who plays Tad in "All My Children," and Michael Tylo, who plays Blade in "The Young and the Restless." The actors will perform live scenes, some with members of the audience; videos of embarrassing moments will be screened; and there will be a question-and-answer period. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 18 at 7.)

**Chow Time**—More than a hundred personal items of designer Tina Chow, who died in 1992, will be exhibited at Christie's, from Sept. 17 to Sept. 21. The collection, which will be auctioned off on Sept. 21 at 7:30, includes a pink silk and velvet Fortuny cape from the thirties and twelve gelatin silver prints of Chow by photographer David Seinder. The auction will be preceded by a benefit reception and private preview, from 5 to 7. (219 E. 67th St. For more information, call 606-0440.)

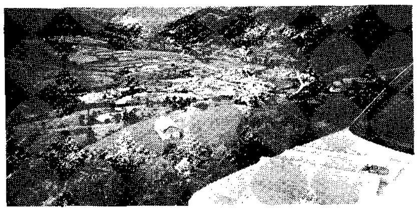
**D'Artagnan Rides Again**—Survivor Productions, which specializes in melodrama, will stage an adaptation of "The Three Musketeers." (Riverside Park Rotunda, W. 79th St. near the Boat Basin. Sept. 17 and Sept. 20-21 at 6 and Sept. 18-19 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

**Readings**—Sept. 20 at 7:30: James Dickey will read from his new novel, "To the White Sea." (Shakespeare & Co., 2259 Broadway, at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 9: Todd Colby, Lizz Winstead, Sharon Mesmer, and others will read from their own poetry, to benefit the Lower East Side Needle Exchange. (Fez at Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 6: Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite will read from his own work. (Hudson River Park, Battery Park City. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 7: Douglas Bauer will read from his new novel, "This Very Air." (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 8: Susan Mitchell and Ron Padgett, among others, will read their own work from "The Best American Poetry: 1992." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5690.)

**Talks**—Sept. 20 at 7:30: Fiction writers Jill Eisenstadt and Walter Kirn, among others, will discuss "Writers Under 30: Voices from the Next Generation." (Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Sq. and LaGuardia Pl. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 6: Peter Gay will talk about aggression in the nineteenth century. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 8: Mario Cuomo will discuss American leadership in the late twentieth century. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

**Tours & Walks**—Sept. 18 at 9:30 A.M.: The New York Transit Museum is offering a tour of a Staten Island ferry, including the engine room and pilothouse. For more information, call 1-718 330-5839. . . . ¶ Sept. 18 at 11 A.M.: Eye on Art Tours will visit artists' studios and galleries in SoHo. For more information, call 877-5117. . . . ¶ Sept. 18 at 1:30: As part of the Washington Square Rediscovery Series, there will be a tour of the home of Jimmy Walker, who was New York's mayor from 1925 to 1932. For more information, call 254-1200. . . . ¶ Sept. 19 at 1: A tour of the Brooklyn Botanical Garden will focus on plants used in potions and lotions. It will be followed by a concert of medieval and Baroque music. For more information, call 1-718 941-4044.

**Memorandum**—Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on Sept. 15.



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**Galicia**

Santiago de Compostela retains a mystery as ancient as the faith that built it. The medieval splendors of this city rose up around the ninth-century shrine of Saint James, now a soaring cathedral. The bounties of the sea that, according to legend, carried the saint to Galicia, provide an astonishing variety of seafood.

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The poetry of the soft green hills of Cantabria was captured 16,000 years ago in the Altamira caves. The elegant coastal towns drew Spain's noble families who carved stately homes and palaces along these shores. The entire town of Santillana del Mar, one of Spain's jewels, has been declared a national monument.

**Asturias**

The greens grow more intense and the mountains more dramatic as one enters Asturias. This compelling land encloses vast mountain lakes and resplendent fishing villages. The graceful city of Oviedo with its entrancing streets and squares has for its sentinel a solemn cathedral.

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The sophisticated charm of San Sebastián made it a favorite seaside resort with Spain's royals. Further inland, hillside towns have an Alpine character. Cooking and eating are revered here. No wonder. The finest cuisine in the country accompanied by robust Rioja Alta wines is one of Spain's great luxuries.

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# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## THE MOVIE HOUSES

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 |  |  |  |  |

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 38.

### EAST SIDE

**ANGELIKA FILM CENTER,** 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Household Saints" (directed by Nancy Savoca), with Tracey Ullman, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lili Taylor, and Judith Malina.
Theatre 2: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).
Theatre 3: "Orlando" (Sally Potter).
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 16: "Especially on Sunday" (Marco Tullio Giordana, Giuseppe Bertolucci, and Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian). From Sept. 17: "Wittgenstein" (Derek Jarman).
Theatre 5: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: "The Wedding Banquet" (†).

**LITTLE THEATRE,** Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Johnny Guitar" (†).

**MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX,** 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).
Theatre 2: "True Romance" (Tony Scott), with Christian Slater and Patricia Arquette.
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "The Secret Garden" (†); and (evenings only) "True Romance."

**VILLAGE THEATRE VII,** 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "The Fugitive" (†).
Theatre 2: "Searching for Bobby Fischer" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 16: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack), with Tom Cruise. From Sept. 17: "Into the West" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 4: "Boxing Helena" (†).
Theatre 5: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Sept. 16: "The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson). From Sept. 17: "Morning Glory" (Steven Stern).
Theatre 7: Through Sept. 16: "The Fugitive" (†). From Sept. 17: "The Age of Innocence" (†).

**CINEMA VILLAGE,** 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Sex Is . . . " (Marc Huestis), a documentary.

**VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS,** 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Praying with Anger."
Theatre 2: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena), with Brad Pitt and Juliette Lewis.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 16: (Separate admissions) "Calendar Girl" (John Whitesell); and "Kalifornia." From Sept. 17: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 4: "Equinox" (Alan Rudolph), with Matthew Modine.
Theatre 5: "House of Angels" (Colin Nutley, in Swedish).
Theatre 6: "Crush" (Alison Maclean).
Theatre 7: "The Ballad of Little Jo" (Maggie Greenwald), with Suzy Amis.

**19TH STREET EAST 6,** B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "True Romance" (Tony Scott), with Christian Slater and Patricia Arquette.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 16: Theatre closed. From Sept. 17: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 3: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).
Theatre 4: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).
Theatre 5: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena), with Brad Pitt and Juliette Lewis.
Theatre 6: "The Fugitive" (†).

**BAY CINEMA,** 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through Sept. 16: "Hard Target" (†).
From Sept. 17: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.

**MURRAY HILL CINEMAS,** 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 2: "Needful Things" (Fraser C. Heston), with Ed Harris.
Theatre 3: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 4: "Boxing Helena" (†).

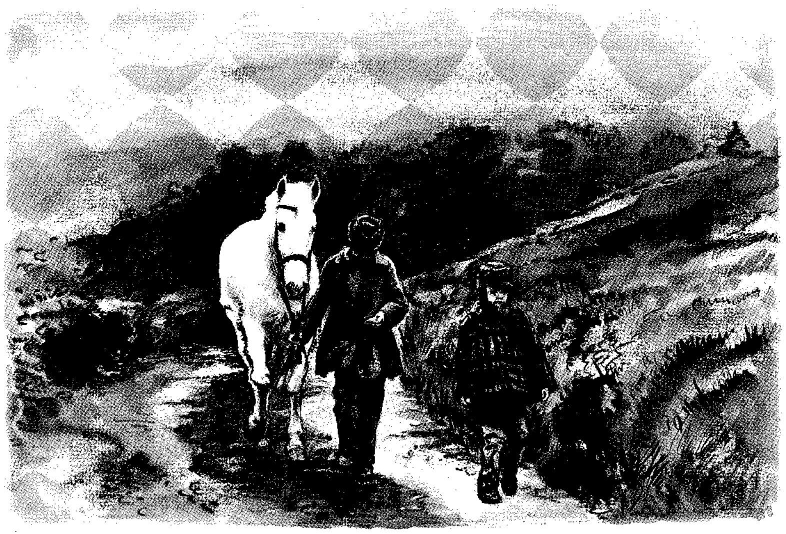
**34TH STREET SHOWPLACE,** 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena).
Theatre 2: "Fortress" (Stuart Gordon).
Theatre 3: "The Fugitive" (†).

**34TH ST. EAST,** 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy).

**EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE,** 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

**SUTTON I AND 2,** 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 16: "The Seventh Coin" (Dror Soref), with Peter O'Toole. From Sept. 17: "Dr. Bethune" (Phillip Borsos), with Donald Sutherland.
Theatre 2: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack), with Tom Cruise.

**GOTHAM CINEMA,** 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"El Cid" (1961, Anthony Mann), with Charlton Heston, Sophia Loren, and Raf Vallone.


ALICIA CZECHOWSKI

*Opening September 17, Tir na nOg, Ruaidhri Conroy, and Ciaran Fitzgerald in "Into the West."*

**PLAZA,** 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).

**MANHATTAN TWIN,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 16: "Fortress" (Stuart Gordon). From Sept. 17: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.

**59TH STREET EAST CINEMA,** 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Hard Target" (†).

**BARONET AND CORONET,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 16: "Rising Sun" (†). From Sept. 17: "The Age of Innocence" (†).

**CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE,** 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boxing Helena" (†).
Theatre 3: "Betty" (Claude Chabrol; in French), with Stéphane Audran.

**FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS,** 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 16: "Needful Things" (Fraser C. Heston), with Ed Harris. From Sept. 17: "Into the West" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 4: "The Wedding Banquet" (†).
Theatre 5: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Secret Garden" (†).

**GEMINI I AND 2,** 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "The Fugitive" (†).
Theatre 2: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena).

**BEEKMAN,** 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).

**NEW YORK TWIN,** 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "True Romance" (Tony Scott), with Christian Slater and Patricia Arquette.
Theatre 2: "Searching for Bobby Fischer" (†).

**68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE,** 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Leon the Pig Farmer" (Vadim Jean and Gary Sinyor).

**TOWER EAST,** 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson).

**EAST 85TH STREET,** 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Boxing Helena" (†).

**PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS,** 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy), with Kim Basinger and Val Kilmer.
Theatre 2: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

**ORPHEUM VII,** 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "True Romance" (Tony Scott), with Christian Slater and Patricia Arquette.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 16: "The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson). From Sept. 17: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 16: "Fortress" (Stuart Gordon). From Sept. 17: "Morning Glory" (Steven Stern), with Christopher Reeve and Deborah Raffin.
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "The Secret Garden" (†); and (evenings only) "Needful Things" (Fraser C. Heston), with Ed Harris.
Theatre 5: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).
Theatre 6: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 7: "The Fugitive" (†).

**86TH STREET EAST TWIN,** 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).

### WEST SIDE

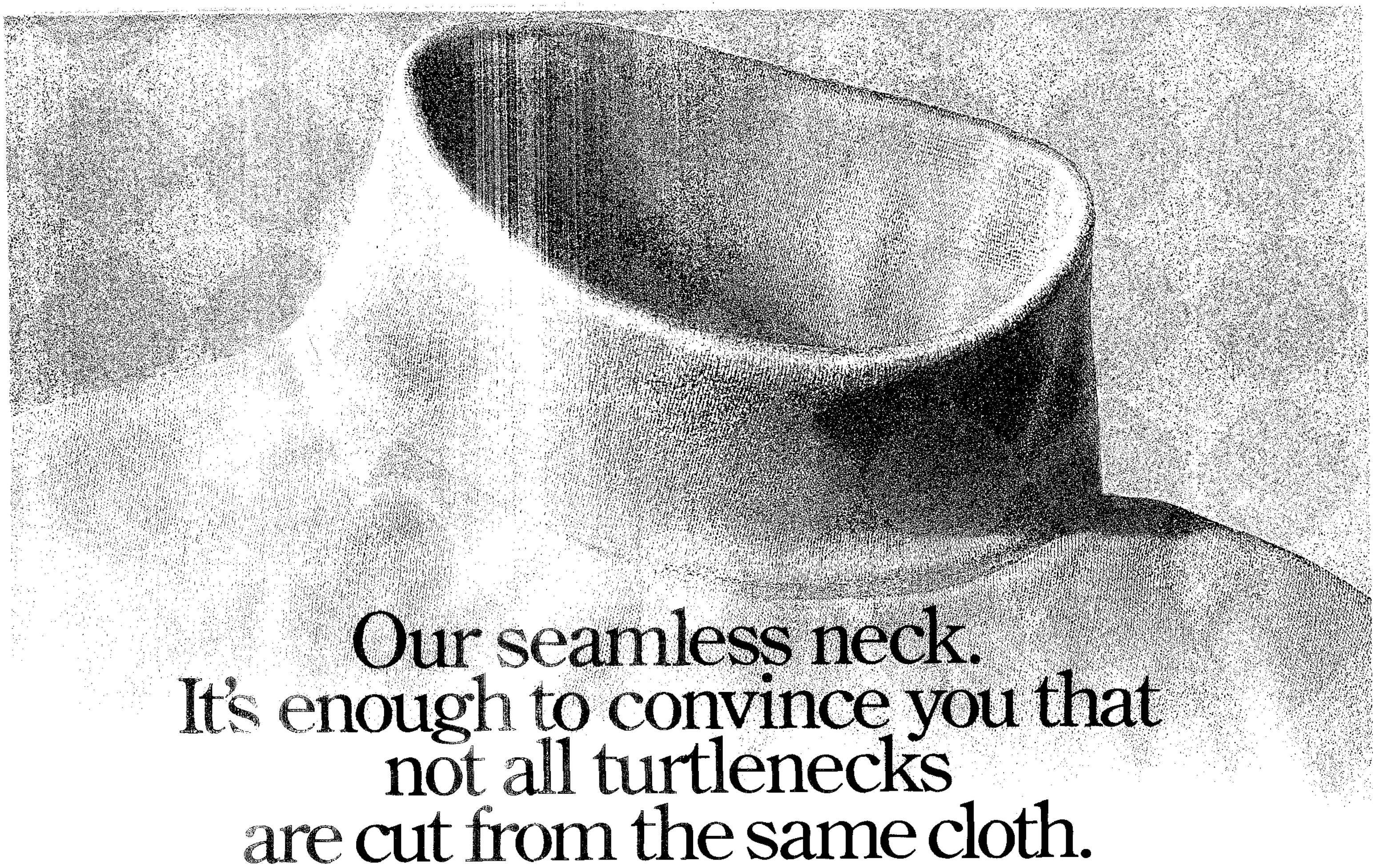
**FILM FORUM,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Djembefola" (1991, directed by Laurent Chevalier), a documentary; and "Mizike Mama" (1992, Violaine de Villers), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: (Separate admissions) "Stepping Razor-Red X" (Nicholas Campbell), a documentary; and "Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives" (Aerlyn Weissman and Lynne Fernie).

**WAVERLY I AND 2,** 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Fortress" (Stuart Gordon).
Theatre 2: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy).

**ART GREENWICH TWIN,** Greenwich Ave. at 12[illegible] (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 2: "Rising Sun" (†).

**QUAD CINEMA,** 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Bad Behavior" (Les Blair), with Stephen Rea and Sinead Cusack.
Theatre 2: "Tokyo Decadence" (Ryu Murakami).
Theatre 3: "Split" (Ellen Fisher Turk and Andrew Weeks), a documentary.
Theatre 4: (Separate admissions) "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann); and "La Vie de Bohème" (Aki Kaurismäki; in French).

**CHELSEA CINEMAS,** 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).



# Our seamless neck. It's enough to convince you that not all turtlenecks are cut from the same cloth.

We could tell you tons about a Lands' End turtleneck. But today, let's focus on the neck. Because what we put into *that* is enough to make you feel warm all over.

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Another thing: our neck, like our body, is made of 100% long-staple cotton, or a cotton/poly blend, if you prefer. But we add a touch of Lycra® spandex to it. This lets the neck s-t-r-e-t-c-h. You can roll it into a turtleneck, and wash it time and again – and it won't sag or poop out like some.

## A neck is not a neck is not a neck.

A neck has a hard life. Just think of the trauma it goes through every time you pull it over your head. So, we add another bit of Lycra® spandex where the neck connects to the shoulders. When you squiggle through, it *gives* a little.

(Some turtlenecks use a piece of cotton tape here. It doesn't stretch the same way; it's likely to pucker and tear.)

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## MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Theatre 3: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross), with Kathleen Turner and Dennis Quaid.
Theatre 4: "Hard Target" (†).
Theatre 5: "Rising Sun" (†).
Theatre 6: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy).
Theatre 8: Through Sept. 16: "Fortress" (Stuart Gordon). From Sept. 17: "Into the West" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 9: "The Secret Garden" (†).

**23rd St. West Triplex,** 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Heart and Souls" (Ron Underwood), with Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer); and (evenings only) "Only the Strong" (Sheldon Lettich).
Theatre 3: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson), with Angela Bassett.

**Guild,** 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"In the Line of Fire" (†).

**Worldwide Cinemas,** 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).
Theatre 2: "Rising Sun" (†).
Theatre 3: "Only the Strong" (Sheldon Lettich).
Theatre 4: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 5: (Matinées only) "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer); and (evenings only) "Road Scholar" (Roger Weisberg).
Theatre 6: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena), with Brad Pitt and Juliette Lewis.

**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through Sept. 16: "Jurassic Park" (†).
From Sept. 17: "The Age of Innocence" (†).

**Festival,** 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through Sept. 16: "Especially on Sunday" (Marco Tullio Giordana, Giuseppe Bertolucci, and Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian).
From Sept. 17: "Morning Glory" (Steven Stern).

**57th St. Playhouse,** 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Household Saints" (Nancy Savoca), with Tracey Ullman, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lili Taylor, and Judith Malina.

**Carnegie Hall Cinemas,** 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Bad Behavior" (Les Blair), with Stephen Rea and Sinead Cusack.

**Angelika 57,** 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"Tokyo Decadence" (Ryu Murakami).

**Paris,** 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"King of the Hill" (Steven Soderbergh).

**Cinema 3,** 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).

**Columbus Circle,** B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson).

**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"In the Line of Fire" (†).

**Lincoln Plaza Cinemas,** B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).
Theatre 2: "Orlando" (Sally Potter).
Theatre 3: "The Wedding Banquet" (†).
Theatre 4: "Samba Traoré" (Idrissa Quédraogo, in Mooré).
Theatre 5: Through Sept. 16: "Guelwaar" (Ousmane Sembène, in French and Wolof). From Sept. 17: "Divertimento" (†).
Theatre 6: "Un Coeur en Hiver" (Claude Sautet, in French), with Daniel Auteuil.

*At the Walter Reade Theatre, a festival of Taiwanese films.*

GERARD NICOLAS

**Regency,** B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).

**84th Street Sixplex,** B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "The Secret Garden" (†); and (evenings only) "Needful Things" (Fraser C. Heston), with Ed Harris.
Theatre 2: "The Fugitive" (†).
Theatre 3: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).
Theatre 4: "Searching for Bobby Fischer" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Sept. 16: "Fortress" (Stuart Gordon). From Sept. 17: "Into the West" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 6: "True Romance" (Tony Scott).

**Metro Cinema I and 2,** B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 16: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy). From Sept. 17: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington).
Theatre 2: "Rising Sun" (†).

**Olympia I and II,** B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Hard Target" (†).
Theatre 2: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena).

## TIMES SQUARE AREA

**Criterion Center,** B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "True Romance" (directed by Tony Scott).
Theatre 2: "Jason Goes to Hell: The Final Friday" (Adam Marcus).
Theatre 3: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 4: "Fortress" (Stuart Gordon).
Theatre 5: "The Fugitive" (†).
Theatre 6: "True Romance."
Theatre 7: "Boxing Helena" (†).

**Embassy I,** B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Firm" (Sydney Pollack), with Tom Cruise.

**Embassy 2, 3, and 4,** 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: "Calendar Girl" (John Whitesell).
Theatre 3: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson), with Angela Bassett.

**Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through Sept. 16: "Needful Things" (Fraser C. Heston), with Ed Harris.
From Sept. 17: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.

**National Twin,** B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Hard Target" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy), with Kim Basinger and Val Kilmer.

## REVIVAL HOUSES

**Film Forum 2,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Sept. 16: "Hurry Sundown" (1967, directed by Otto Preminger), with Michael Caine and Jane Fonda.
Sept. 17-18: "Bunny Lake Is Missing" (1965, Otto Preminger), with Laurence Olivier; and "Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon" (1970, Preminger), with Liza Minnelli.
Sept. 19: "Exodus" (†).
Sept. 20-21: "Daisy Kenyon" (1947, Otto Preminger), with Joan Crawford; and "The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell" (1955, Preminger), with Gary Cooper.

**Gramercy,** Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through Sept. 18: "Butterfield 8" (1960, Daniel Mann), with Elizabeth Taylor; and "The Last Time I Saw Paris" (1954, Richard Brooks), with Taylor and Van Johnson.
Sept. 19-21: "Jane Eyre" (1944, Robert Stevenson), with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles; and "Elephant Walk" (1954, William Dieterle), with Elizabeth Taylor, Dana Andrews, and Peter Finch.

**Thalia,** B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
Through Sept. 16: "The Wrong Man" (1956, Alfred Hitchcock), with Henry Fonda; and "I Confess" (1953, Alfred Hitchcock), with Montgomery Clift.
Sept. 17-18: "Baby Doll" (1956, Elia Kazan), with Karl Malden, Carroll Baker, and Eli Wallach; and "A Face in the Crowd" (†).
Sept. 19-20: "Union Pacific" (1939, Cecil B. De Mille), with Barbara Stanwyck and Joel McCrea; and "Annie Oakley" (1935, George Stevens), with Stanwyck and Preston Foster.
Sept. 21: "The Nasty Girl" (1989; Michael Verhoeven; in German); and "The White Rose" (1983, Verhoeven; in German).

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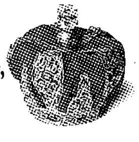

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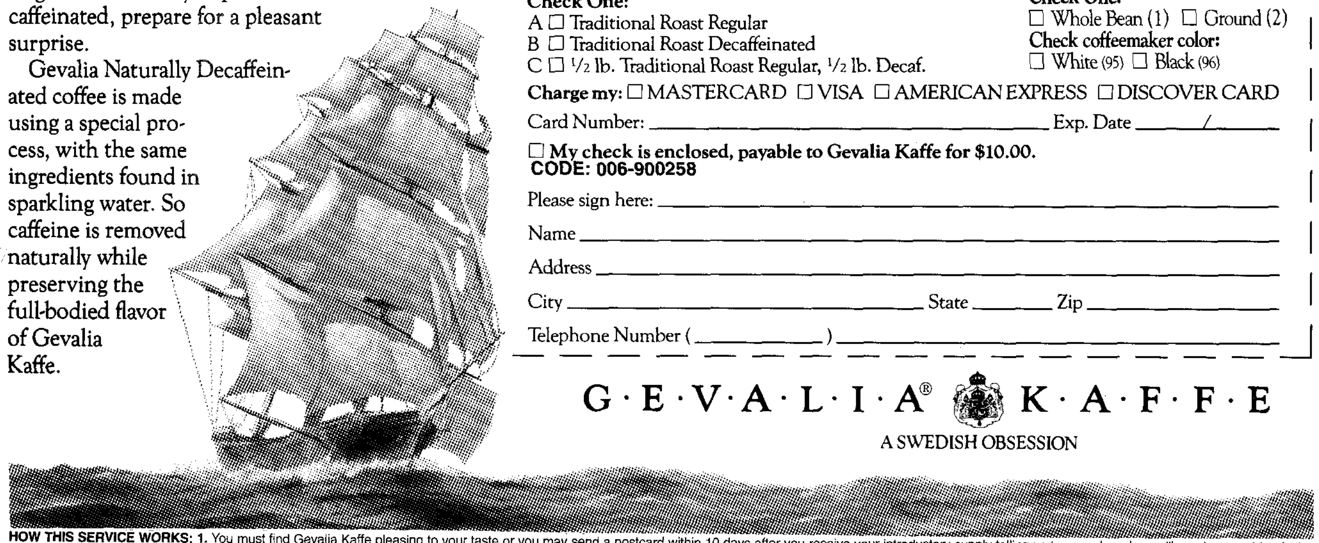

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## MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

**Theatre 80 St. Marks,** 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Sept. 15: "Sudden Fear" (1952, David Miller), with Joan Crawford; and "Harriet Craig" (1950, Vincent Sherman), with Crawford.

Sept. 16: "Tess" (†).

Sept. 17-18: "Fellini Satyricon" (1970, Federico Fellini; in Italian); and "Fellini's Roma" (1972, Fellini; in Italian).

Sept. 19: "Touch of Evil" (1958, Orson Welles), with Welles, Charlton Heston, and Janet Leigh; and "Shadow of a Doubt" (1942, Alfred Hitchcock), with Teresa Wright and Joseph Cotten.

Sept. 20: "La Terra Trema" (1947, Luchino Visconti; in Sicilian dialect).

Sept. 21: "The Big Sleep" (1946, Howard Hawks), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Martha Vickers; and "To Have and Have Not" (1944, Howard Hawks), with Bogart, Bacall, and Walter Brennan.

## FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

**Museum of Modern Art,** Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Sept. 16 at 2:30: "Lazybones" (1925, directed by Frank Borzage; silent). . . . ¶ Sept. 16 at 6: "Sally of the Sawdust" (1925, D. W. Griffith; silent). . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 2:30 and Sept. 19 at 5: "The Member of the Wedding" (see below). . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 6 and Sept. 20 at 2:30: "I Am a Camera" (1955, Henry Cornelius), with Julie Harris. . . . ¶ Sept. 18 at 2 and Sept. 21 at 6: "East of Eden" (1955, Elia Kazan), with Harris. . . . ¶ Sept. 18 at 5 and Sept. 21 at 2:30: "The Haunting" (1963, Robert Wise), with Harris. . . . ¶ Sept. 19 at 2 and Sept. 20 at 6: "The Hiding Place" (1975, James F. Collier), with Harris.

**American Museum of the Moving Image,** 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"Silent Movies/Loud Music," a series of silent films with new musical scores performed by the composers. Sept. 17 at 8, Sept. 18 at 7, and Sept. 19 at 3: "The Unknown" (1927, Tod Browning), with Joan Crawford and Lon Chaney. Music by Phillip Johnston's Big Trouble. . . . ¶ Sept. 18 at 3 and Sept. 19 at 7: "Koko the Clown," a series of live-action and animated cartoons from the twenties. Music by Samm Bennett.

**Walter Reade Theatre,** Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Sept. 15 at 2, 3:45, and 9; Sept. 16 at 2, 4, 6, and 8; Sept. 17 at 2, 5:45, and 7:30; Sept. 18 at 8:30; Sept. 19 at 4, 5:45, and 8:45; Sept. 20 at 2, 4, 6:15, and 8:15; and Sept. 21 at 2 and 4:15: A program of films from Taiwan.

**Bryant Park,** Sixth Ave. at 41st St.—Mondays, starting at dusk, free, drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes cartoons, coming attractions, and an onscreen clock that counts down the minutes until the feature begins. Sept. 20: "From Here to Eternity" (1953, Fred Zinnemann), with Burt Lancaster, Montgomery Clift, Frank Sinatra, Deborah Kerr, and Donna Reed.

# MOVIES IN BRIEF

**SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.**

## *Enormous Changes*

In the 1952 film version of "The Member of the Wedding" (playing September 17 and 19, at the Museum of Modern Art), Fred Zinnemann and his cast—Julie Harris, Ethel Waters, and Brandon deWilde—create grungy, silvery poetry from Carson McCullers' novel and play about a misfit preteen-ager. The twenty-six-year-old Harris is Frankie Adams, a lonely, motherless girl who convinces herself that her brother and his fiancée will take her away with them right after their wedding. Near the start, Frankie can't get over how "suddenly" her brother's plans alter her perception of the world. The movie is sudden, too. Zinnemann evokes the adolescent need to connect in unexpected mood changes and intense emotional effects.

Frankie is smitten as soon as she serves mint juleps to the newlyweds-to-be. By the time she tells her father's cook and housekeeper, Berenice (Waters), and her six-year-old cousin, John Henry (deWilde), how rapturous the couple makes her feel, she's already floating in a dream—and these two pals can't bring her back to earth. Harris captures the agony and euphoria of self-dramatizing youth. As she goes from heroic declarations to pathetic sobs, she never loses the note of authentic urgency. DeWilde's alert, inscrutable deadpan gives John Henry's bouts of acting-out a startling, farcical edge—especially when he dubs a doll Belle, kisses her, then slugs her. And Waters imbues Berenice with deep-humored empathy and wisdom. When deWilde and Harris join Waters on the final chorus of "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," Zinnemann's loving closeup becomes part of their stirring harmony.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

**The Age of Innocence**—Martin Scorsese returns to form with this hectic adaptation of Edith Wharton's novel. Life in the New York of the eighteen-seventies may have been constrained, but it was never dull—not if Scorsese's camera is anything to go by, leaping from detail to detail like the gaze of an inquisitive gentleman. Everything looks right, from roast duck to waistcoats, but the movie has no ambitions to be a costume museum; it homes in on the passions that had to be veiled by good manners. As the film begins—a showy, overwhelming scene at the opera—we see Newland Archer (Daniel Day-Lewis) about to announce a perfect match with the young May Welland (Winona Ryder). Such perfection is a prison, with no hope of escape, and the vigorous sadness of Day-Lewis tells the whole story; he will never rebel, but in his eyes you see him wishing he could. Less fruitful is the casting of Michelle Pfeiffer as May's older cousin, the mysterious Countess Olenska, with whom Archer falls hopelessly in love. With her silly blond curls, Pfeiffer looks more plaintive than the dark exotic of Wharton's imagination. For all that, Scorsese does convince you of their tragedy; the radiant coloring of the movie, fire against darkness, hints at a love that cannot burn for long, and that others will do their best to douse. This is a world run by the snob mob, the GoodFellas of Fifth Avenue, with all the control and none of the bloodshed; no wonder Scorsese feels at home.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/13/93.) (Village Theatre VII, Coronet, and Ziegfeld; starting Sept. 17.)

**Boxing Helena**—Jennifer Lynch's directorial début. She appears to have inherited a taste for weirdness from her father, David, but none of the talent. Sherilyn Fenn plays Helena, who spends her life wearing complicated underwear in front of open windows, or else arguing with her boyfriend (Bill Paxton). But she is secretly desired by Nick (Julian Sands), a doctor with mannerisms so nervous that you wouldn't trust him to tie his own shoelaces, let alone wield a scalpel. When Helena is run over, he amputates her crushed legs, and then, for good measure, her arms. With the help of dream lighting and a pelvic soundtrack, Lynch is aiming for a parable of sexual control, a kind of porno "Pygmalion"; but on the whole her work is not garish or goofy enough to become a cult hit; it's just precociously dumb.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, East 85th Street, and Criterion Center.)

**Divertimento**—With Michel Piccoli, Emmanuelle Béart, and Jane Birkin; directed by Jacques Rivette. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; starting Sept. 17.)

**Exodus** (1960)—Otto Preminger's painstaking reverence for the Leon Uris best-seller about the struggles among the Arabs, Jews, and British that accompanied the birth of Israel, in 1948, results in a film that runs three hours and forty-five minutes. He permits nearly everyone in the large cast to state his political convictions before and after each new turn of events, and the result is an awesome talkfest. The camera picks up a group across a courtyard or around a corner, and follows them as they mount other stairs, penetrate a corridor, and arrive at a door. (There are more doors in "Exodus" than in the Waldorf-Astoria.) The door opens, a hand beckons, and the visitors file in silently. Oh boy, something is about to happen! But no; the talkers have gathered only to indulge again in their favorite pastime. With Paul Newman, Ralph Richardson, Eva Marie Saint, Sal Mineo, Lee J. Cobb, Hugh Griffith, Gregory Ratoff, Felix Aylmer, and David Opatoshu. Dalton Trumbo's script makes the various factions seem so reasonable that a viewer may begin to wonder why all the problems of the Middle East weren't settled over a glass of tea.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 19.)

**A Face in the Crowd** (1957)—Andy Griffith as a hillbilly guitarist who rises to dangerous prominence on television in Elia Kazan's blast at the Fascist potential in American mass culture. Some exciting scenes in the first half, but the later developments are frenetic, and by the end the film is a loud and discordant mess. With Patricia Neal, Walter Matthau, and Anthony Franciosa. They could all use a good cold shower. Lee Remick, making her film début, is an amazingly sexy young baton-twirler. Budd Schulberg wrote the script.—P.K. (Thalia; Sept. 17-18.)

**The Fugitive**—Harrison Ford plays Dr. Richard Kimble, who is wrongly accused of murdering his wife and sentenced to death. What gives this adaptation of the old TV series its extra kick is the presence of Tommy Lee Jones, as U.S. Deputy Marshal Sam Gerard, hot on Kimble's trail, and enjoying the heat. The director is Andrew Davis, who brought us the schlocky "Under Siege"; this is equally tense and insistent, but the two leading men rack it up to a higher level altogether—they even overcome the rude horrors of James Newton Howard's soundtrack. It's a pleasure to find a thriller fulfilling its duties with such gusto: the emotions ring solid, the script finds time to relax into backchat, and

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**Lisa Wallen**
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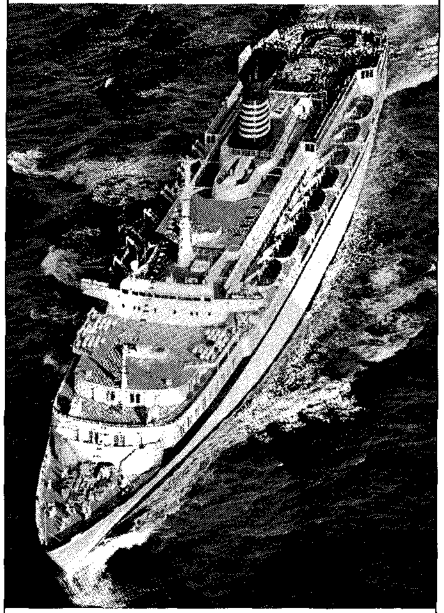

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

for once the stunts look like acts of desperation rather than shows of prowess.—A.L. (8/16/93) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

**Hard Target**—Making his American-movie début, the celebrated Hong Kong action specialist John Woo directs kick-boxing star Jean-Claude Van Damme, who again disguises his Belgian accent by playing a Cajun—a New Orleans-based merchant seaman on the trail of a steely sports entrepreneur (Lance Henriksen) who charges millionaire hunters five hundred thousand bucks for the chance to use homeless Vietnam vets as prey. Chuck Pfarrer, the screenwriter, doesn't put a spin on the timeworn premise of "The Most Dangerous Game"—he appropriates it outright. The gap between primitive, chaotic storytelling and bits and pieces of flashy, expressive moviemaking is more risible than any of the movie's conscious humor. Woo never musters a full head of steam. The king of overkill here is Van Damme—even after perforating an enemy with bullets, he insists on delivering a kick de grâce.—M.S. (59th Street East Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and National Twin. . . . ¶ Bay Cinema; through Sept. 16.)

**In the Line of Fire**—Clint Eastwood plays Frank Horrigan, a tired-looking middle-aged Secret Service agent who gets wind of a plot to kill the President and marshals his flagging powers in an attempt to stop the assassin (John Malkovich). It's a basic race against the clock: the good guy knows what the bad guy means to do; the villain's preparations and the hero's investigation run on separate tracks until they converge, like runaway trains, at the scene of the intended crime. The heroics are stirring, because the star's ravaged face and stiff, weary gestures tell us that everything Horrigan does costs him something, physically and emotionally. The director, Wolfgang Petersen, isn't a particularly imaginative or stylish filmmaker, but he delivers the goods, and in record time. Both Eastwood's performance and the movie itself have the quality of meat-and-potatoes genre-picture entertainment: nothing fancy, nothing unusual. The only hints of more exotic and unpredictable sensations come from Malkovich, who is threatening to become the most gloriously peculiar screen presence since the heyday of Alastair Sim.—T.R. (7/12/93) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, 62nd & Broadway, and Embassy.)

**Johnny Guitar** (1954)—In Jean-Luc Godard's "Pierrot le Fou," the hero allows his maid to go to the movies three times in one week because Nicholas Ray's "Johnny Guitar" is playing: "It's good she's getting the right education," he informs his wife. For the rest of us, Ray's baroque, haywire "adult" Western is good for a laugh. Erotic tension and angst, circa 1954, invade the Old Arizona landscapes, and the mixture makes the movie spectacularly incongruous and funny. Joan Crawford stars as Vienna, the owner of a frontier casino bar. She wants the railroad to cut through the territory of the bad guys—a gang of range-riding plutocrats. But the true reason for all the movie's rampaging is that Emma (Mercedes McCambridge), the local Ms. Big, is a sexually repressed banker who's jealous of Vienna's animal magnetism. Ray's barrelling pace—and his penchant for pulp words and pop icons—must have been what impressed Godard. Even Crawford's leading men have gaudy monikers: Sterling Hayden is Johnny Guitar and Scott Brady is the Dancin' Kid. One strums, the other two-steps. Throughout, the sexual symbolism is hilarious. Crawford's props and costumes (including holster and neckband) could have been inspired by Krafft-Ebing and color-coded by Walt Disney.—M.S. (Little Theatre.)

**The Joy Luck Club**—Amy Tan's 1989 novel is actually a collection of sixteen linked short stories about Chinese immigrant mothers trying to impart their knowledge of life to their Americanized daughters. Unfortunately, Tan and Ronald Bass ("Rain Man"), who wrote the movie, have attempted to cram all her mini-narratives into the script, diminishing instead of enlarging them. The contemporary scenes of marital discord and generational strife seem pat or trite, while the flashbacks to the mothers' woeful lives in China seem overblown or empty and portentous. Wayne Wang's direction doesn't have the oracular pull of Tan's prose, but that's only part of the problem. Tan and Bass rely so heavily on voice-over narration that it sponges up the possibilities for genuine drama and emotion. Even when a woman cuts a piece of skin off her arm to endow her ailing mother's soup with healing powers, or another drowns her baby to punish her husband, the movie's own vital signs stay flat. By the end, the filmmakers just about beg for tears. The cast includes Kieu Chinh, Ming-Na Wen, Tamlyn Tomita, Tsai Chin, France Nuyen, Lauren Tom, Lisa Lu, Rosalind Chao, and Andrew McCarthy.—M.S. (Cinema I.)

**Jurassic Park**—Steven Spielberg's warm-blooded, state-of-the-art dinosaurs are a lot speedier than their nearest movie kin, the galumphing atomic-mutant monsters that crunched Japanese cities under their feet in the fifties and early sixties, and that enables the filmmaker to create dynamic stalk-and-chase sequences. But neither the carnivorous dinos nor the placid herbivores inspire anything close to awe, even with the aid of audience stimulants like surging symphonic music (by the shameless John Williams) and repeated closeups of wide-eyed, openmouthed actors. The screenplay, which is credited to Michael Crichton and David Koepp, reduces Crichton's intricately constructed novel to its bare bones: people running away from hungry animals. For all the ingenuity of the movie's engineering, "Jurassic Park" doesn't have the imagination—or the courage—to take us any place we haven't been a thousand times before. It's just a creature feature on amphetamines.—T.R. (6/28/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Ziegfeld; through Sept. 16.)

**Manhattan Murder Mystery**—Woody Allen's new picture is his lightest and most unabashedly frivolous feature since "Broadway Danny Rose," in 1984. All that the movie aspires to be is a speedy, bubbly screwball-comedy who-dunit, and it's pleasant enough, but Allen hasn't practiced the simple act of popular entertainment in quite a while, and he's rusty. The humor thins out as the movie goes along, because Allen tends to labor, and even to repeat, his gags. The main characters, Larry and Carol Lipton (Allen and Diane Keaton), suspect that their across-the-hall neighbor has killed his wife, and try to play detective. You could call the movie a comic version of "Rear Window" if it weren't for the inconvenient fact that "Rear Window" is a much funnier picture.—T.R. (8/23 & 30/93) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Beekman, Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

**Rising Sun**—Philip Kaufman's witty, luxuriantly sinister mystery thriller is set in contemporary Los Angeles: a sleek, corporate environment that isn't merely shady and deceitful, but fundamentally inauthentic, like virtual reality. The murder of a blond party girl in the boardroom of a powerful Japanese corporation exposes a dense network of connections—among business enterprises (Japanese and American), politicians, the police, and the press. The L.A.P.D. detectives investigating the case—Connor (Sean Connery), a Japan expert, and Smith (Wesley Snipes), his young partner—don't stand heroically apart from this alluring corporate culture; they're ambiguous heroes in a looking-glass world. Connery and Snipes are both wonderful here. Kaufman treats cop-movie narrative conventions and film-noir visual style with a kind of affectionate irony; the picture provides plenty of creepy atmosphere and violent action, and its pace is relentless, but the over-all mood is playful, almost giddy.

The terrific supporting cast includes Harvey Keitel, Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa, Tia Carrere, Ray Wise, Kevin Anderson, and Mako.—T.R. (7/26/93) (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Coronet; through Sept. 16.)

**Searching for Bobby Fischer**—In his début as a writer-director, Steven Zaillian does to Fred Waitzkin's autobiographical book exactly what he did to Oliver Sacks' "Awakenings" in the script for Penny Marshall's film: he shears away the fascinating details and the complicated mesh of real-life characters, and constructs a hollow little fable about the need to lead a free, independent, and well-rounded life. Max Pomeranc, a highly ranked young chess player offscreen, plays Josh Waitzkin (Fred's son), a prodigy who shows his parents (Joe Mantegna and Joan Allen) and the whole chess world that nice guys can finish first. Zaillian forces the cast into a moral paradigm: Mantegna is the competitive parent, Allen is the humanistic one; Ben Kingsley is the instinct-squelching teacher, who passes his own fear and loathing about winning *and* losing to his student, while Laurence Fishburne is the intuitive one, a Washington Square Park speed-chess freak who inspires exuberant invention. Zaillian never figures out how to explicate a chess match; maybe that's why he has to stoop to a "Rocky" ending. This movie could have used a director who both loved chess and was enough of a technical wizard to make it cinematic. Maybe the producers should have spent more time searching for Stanley Kubrick.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

**The Secret Garden**—Working from a desiccated adaptation (by Caroline Thompson), the director, Agnieszka Holland, lays the pall of self-conscious artistry over Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic tale of a bratty orphan (Kate Maberly) who learns to embrace life by tending a garden of her own. Holland and Thompson edit the story down to basics, pitting the girl, her sickly cousin (Heydon Prowse), and a sturdy peasant lad (Andrew Knott) against the adults who run the Yorkshire mansion of her morose hunchback uncle (John Lynch). What's missing is Burnett's robust optimism and animistic energy. The director can sustain only one mood at a time; she flip-flops from tasteful gloom and doom to ersatz magic and high jinks. And her techniques are painfully bald. When the garden blooms and a children's choir warbles on the soundtrack, the movie is like a music box with all its cogs exposed. Maggie Smith is wasted as the nasty housekeeper, Mrs. Medlock. (Clarence Brown's brisk and handsome 1949 M-G-M production, starring Margaret O'Brien, was heartier entertainment.)—M.S. (First & 62nd Cinemas, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Sixplex. Matinées only.)

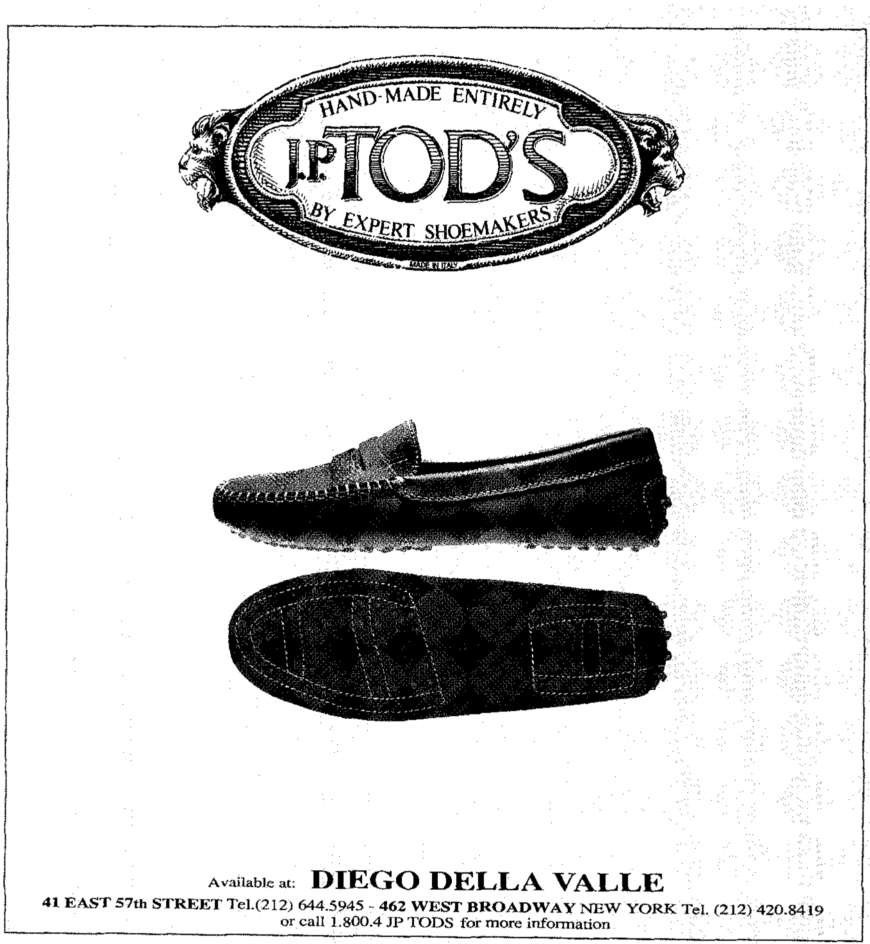
**Sleepless in Seattle**—A romantic comedy, of sorts. The romance is airy and distant, because the lovers never meet until the final scene, and the comedy is kind of wistful, because it was directed by Nora Ephron. Tom Hanks plays Sam, left miserable by the death of his wife, with only his young son, Jonah (Ross Malinger), to console him. The consolation goes a bit far; Jonah rings up a radio talk show to say that his dad needs love. Many listeners melt with sympathy, none more so than Annie (Meg Ryan), in Baltimore, shortly to be married and none too happy about it. For the rest of the movie, fate—and Jonah—do their best to bring the couple together, despite the continent that divides them. Hanks and Ryan have quick wits, and funny faces to match—they should be striking sparks off each other, not mooching around thousands of miles apart and waiting for something to happen. Hanks has a few goofy outbursts, and there is lively backup from Rosie O'Donnell and Rob Reiner as helpful friends, but anyone expecting another "When Harry Met Sally . . ." will be disappointed. At least Harry *met* Sally.—A.L. (7/19/93) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Baronet, 86th Street East Twin, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

**Tess** (1979)—Roman Polanski's version of Thomas Hardy's "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" is beautifully structured, and the craftsmanship is hypnotic. But the picture is tame. For a reader, the shock of the 1891 book is that Tess isn't simply a woman at the mercy of men, society, and nature; she's also at the mercy of her own passions. Polanski's Tess (the lovely young Nastassia Kinski, seventeen when she played the role) is strictly a victim of men and social conventions. The film takes a sympathetic, feminist position toward her—in a narrow and demeaning sense. She isn't a protagonist; she is merely a hapless, frail creature, buffeted by circumstances. With fine performances by Leigh Lawson, Peter Firth, John Collin, Tony Church, and just about everyone else in the supporting cast.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 16.)

*Opening September 15, Judith Malina and Tracey Ullman in "Household Saints."*

KRAWCZYK

**The Wedding Banquet**—Except for the title celebration itself—a ritualized mob scene that gets weirder and funnier as it goes on—this cross-cultural, cross-sexual comedy-drama, set in New York City, is just a wan getting-to-know-you fable for alternative families. Ang Lee's film centers on the marital subterfuge of a successful gay Taiwanese immigrant (Winston Chao): despite having a longtime companion (Mitchell Lichtenstein), he weds a struggling artist (May Chin) from mainland China to satisfy his traditional parents, who come from Taiwan for an extended visit as soon as they learn he's engaged. It's the kind of earnest melting-pot story designed to explain everyone to everyone. It's not piercing enough for drama or heartless enough for farce: the lead characters may be gay, but in comic terms nearly everyone functions as a straight man. Chao and Lichtenstein are likable, but Chin, as the confused, desirous bride, and Sihung Lung and Ah-Leh Gua, as the dignified, well-meaning father and mother, are the ones who deserve cheers.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



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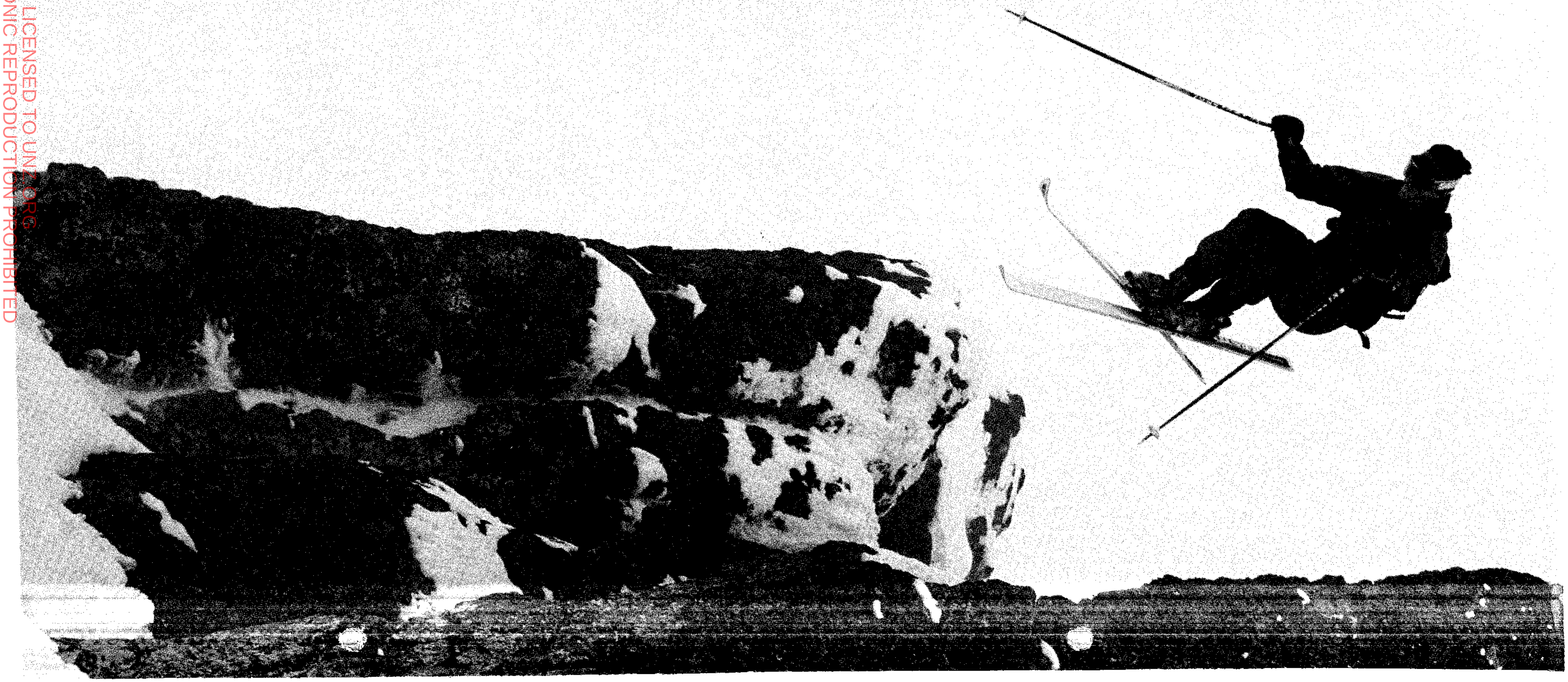
# POLO SPORT

RALPH LAUREN



THE
NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

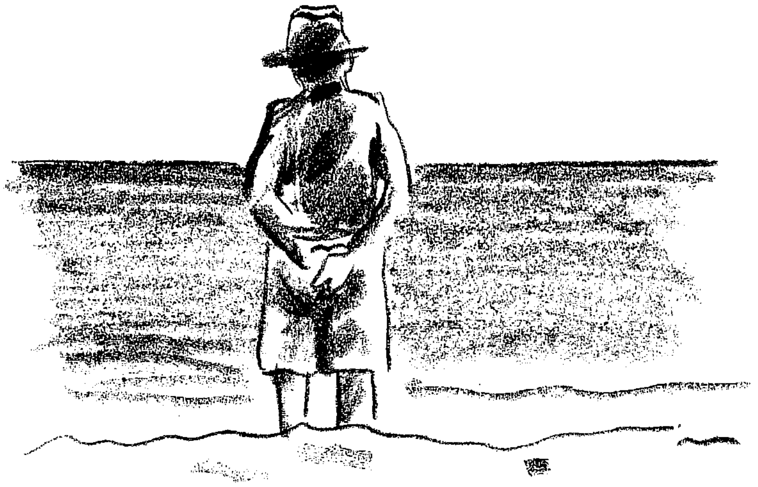
## BIG SPENDER

BEFORE the fancy party held last week to celebrate the opening of the new Barneys department store, at the corner of Madison Avenue and Sixty-first Street, the architect of the building, Peter Marino, led a rapid floor-by-floor tour of the premises. It was that period of pre-opening chaos when a hundred different aspects of construction must be completed: scaffoldings removed, floors polished, and stock brought in to fill what appear to be endless miles of counters, display cases, and clothing racks. The uptown Barneys is said to be the first entirely new department store erected in this city since Bergdorf Goodman's suave pastiche of Parisian architectural chic went up on Fifth Avenue more than half a century ago, replacing the vast red brick Vanderbilt mansion.

Occupying almost a quarter of a million square feet of space, Barneys is certainly a novelty on Madison Avenue, celebrated for its small shops. The building takes care to accommodate itself in scale and solidity to a couple of its old-fashioned near neighbors, the Pierre Hotel and the Metropolitan Club. Its exceptionally ample windows are decorated with iron railings, and it is clad in a French limestone that to Marino's eye gives off a warm glow. "The stone came from the same quarries as the stone out of which so many of the great châteaux along the Loire were built," Marino said. "I use it on some of the floors inside the building as well. I've also designed floors consisting of elegant marble mosaics—very Stanford White. It's rare nowadays for an architect to be allowed to do both the interior and the exterior of a building, but how absurd *not* to be allowed to! Everything in this building has been designed by my office, right down to the rugs that the customers will be walking on."

A trim, good-looking man of forty-three, Marino is often described as the most fashionable architect of the day, but "fashionable" is a word he deplores. "I am content to be one of the busiest, let's leave it at that," he says. "I do admit that my clients tend to be—*have* to be—very rich. The best designs, like the best workmanship, have always been expensive. Kings used to spend much of their time complaining about how much their palaces cost. No matter. The palaces were worth it, were they not? We are lucky to have them." Marino, who is of mixed Italian and Ukrainian ancestry, grew up in Bayside, Queens; graduated from Cornell in 1971; worked for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, George Nelson, and I. M. Pei; and started his own firm in 1976. His first private commission was to remodel a town house for Andy Warhol. (Warhol paid him in pictures.) He has offices in New York, Paris, East Hampton, and Philadelphia, and employs upward of eighty architects and interior designers. He strives to keep his practice balanced between corporate and domestic clients. "Unless you keep your hand in with houses," he says, "you lose the knack of caring about detail, which is to say about ordinary human needs and the means of satisfying them. I try to do at least three houses a year." Marino has designed houses for Gianni Agnelli, Giorgio Armani, and Calvin Klein, and three houses for the financier Ronald Perelman.

Marino was notably calm during the tour of Barneys, though he was interrupted scores of times to answer questions about the arrival or disappearance of materials, the placement of display cases, and the "tuning" of lights. "All this is very much like the opening night of a big musical on Broadway," he said. "Nobody unfamiliar with the process can believe how things are made to fall into place at the last possible moment. I take



OLIVER WILLIAMS

care not to get overly alarmed on my projects, big or small. The curtain will go up, and it will go up on time." And so it did.

## COW POX

William Graham is a private detective of fifteen years' standing who specializes in investigating insurance frauds. He lives in South Carolina, but last winter he was sent to Cortland County, New York, on an unusual assignment. He was asked to go there by an insurance company in Florida to investigate the death of a prize black-and-white Holstein cow. The animal had belonged to a dairy farmer named James T. Wright, who had insured it for two hundred thousand dollars. The insurers wanted to know why it had died, and whether it had really been worth so much money. It seemed like an undemanding task. But Mr. Graham's investigation was to assume tragic proportions, culminating in the suicides of two suspected cow killers—Mr. Wright, aged forty-two, and his friend Gregory Wilcom, twenty-six, a Holstein breeder who lived in Maryland.

When we met Mr. Graham to discuss the case, he had checked in to the Econo Lodge in Jersey City the previous night and had rapidly made himself at home. His room was strewn with possessions, including dozens of blank cassettes, a video camera, seven apples, five newspapers, an old tin for his toothbrush to stand in, a clay pipe, some sardines, three cans of pork and beans, a book titled "You and the Law," a box of lightbulbs, and a handgun. He is a short man, with a round face, a graying beard, and almost no eyebrows.

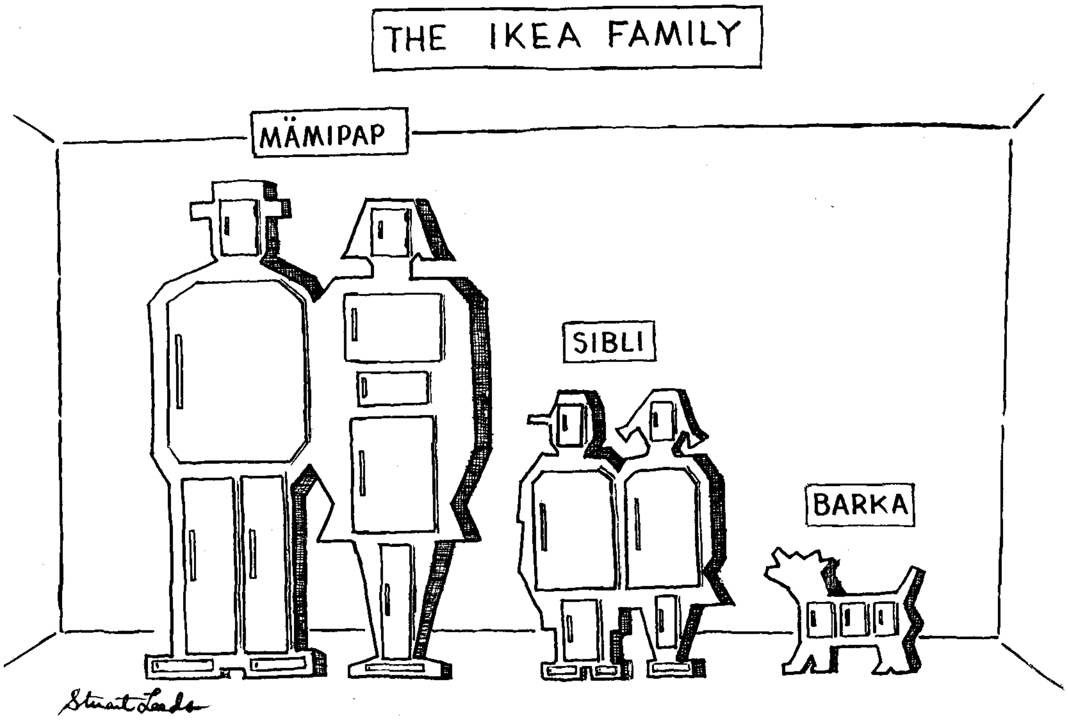
Recalling his first visit to James Wright's farm, last December, Mr. Graham said that he had found Mr. Wright relaxed and easygoing. Wright was a highly respected figure in the world of show cows, having judged international competitions everywhere from Colombia to Japan. He made a living selling milk, trading Holsteins, and boarding other owners' cows. A former employee described him as "happy-go-lucky." Mr. Wright's wife, Margaret, to whom he had been married for thirteen years, was well known as a professional photographer of cows. Mr. Graham said he found nothing incriminating about Mr. Wright's behavior during their meeting but was surprised that Wright wasn't more upset by his cow's death. "I'd have been terribly distressed if it had been my cow," he said.

Mr. Graham's investigation then took him to Gregory Wilcom's farm in Ijamsville, Maryland, on the trail of two other cow deaths. Mr. Wilcom, who had sold Wright the two-hundred-thousand-dollar cow, lived on the farm with his wife, Pamela. His cows had won national competitions. However, Wilcom's dealings with James Wright seemed to Bill Graham to be suspiciously ill-fated: Wilcom had sold Wright two other cows, and they, too, had promptly died, one of them "on the very day that it got up there to Wright's farm." This cow had been bought by Mr. Wright for eighty-five thousand dollars. The other cow, which died at Wright's property on January 30, 1992, was insured for fifty thousand dollars, according to Hartford Insurance, the company in Chicago through which Wright had insured it.

Mr. Graham said the first important lead in the case came to him from an employee of Mr. Wright's, who revealed that the eighty-five-thousand-dollar cow had arrived at the Cortland County farm wearing an udder halter. "Now, an udder halter is like a bra," the detective explained. "It's for support of the udder. But a show cow supposedly doesn't need any kind of support. It's like Marilyn Monroe." His conclusion was that no cow with an udder halter could possibly be worth as much as eighty-five thousand dollars. Mr. Graham came to suspect that James Wright and Gregory Wilcom were buying cheap cows, insuring them for much more than their real value, killing them—possibly by an injection in their tail veins, though he found no firm evidence of this—and splitting the insurance money.

On March 6th of this year, Mr. Graham decided that he would try to scare the two suspects into confessing their fraud. He started by phoning Mr. Wilcom, telling him there were serious problems with his insurance claims, saying something about tail veins, and advising him to hire an attorney. The next day, Mr. Wilcom killed himself by swallowing strychnine. As he was dying, Pamela Wilcom said, he had asked her to bury him with a Premier Exhibitor Banner that he had won at a cow show. The police in Maryland concluded that Mr. Wilcom "may have been under a lot of stress" because he was under investigation for "suspected illegal insurance fraud activities with James T. Wright."

As soon as he learned of Gregory Wilcom's death, Mr.



Graham tried to contact Mr. Wright, but couldn't reach him. A few days later came the news that he, too, had committed suicide. On the evening of March 12th, Mr. Wright checked in to the Comfort Inn in Cortland, and shot himself in the chest with a pistol-grip gun.

## COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO

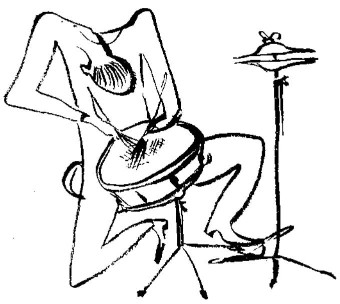
Harry C. Batchelder, Jr., who has been a criminal-defense attorney for fourteen years, has a combative style but has never been among the city's most celebrated practitioners; for years, he made a sizable part of his living by accepting assignments from judges to represent indigent defendants. He was well known to prosecutors but to few others. That is about to change, however, for he has been retained to defend Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who was recently charged in federal court with leading "a war of urban terrorism" in and around New York.

It is Mr. Batchelder's opinion that one case in particular brought him to Mr. Abdel Rahman's attention. "Some time ago, I represented a Palestinian named Hussein Yaghman, who was charged with murder in Queens," he says. "Hussein's daughter had been raped, and he killed the father and brother of the guy who did it. I raised a cultural defense, and called in a Muslim sheikh to testify about what blood feuds mean. Hussein was acquitted of the murders and convicted of manslaughter—which is just how it should have been." Mr. Batchelder promises to conduct an equally aggressive defense of Mr. Abdel Rahman. "My defense is that he did not conspire with anyone to commit any illegal act," he says. "I don't even think he said anything so fiery, when you compare his statements to some of the things my idol, Patrick Henry, said during the American Revolution. If we can get a fair trial, he will be acquitted."

Now fifty-seven, Mr. Batchelder wears his hair in a crewcut and carries himself with a martial air; indeed, he spent several years in Air Force Special Operations during the Vietnam War. The clipboard he carries in court is camouflage-patterned. For relaxation, Mr. Batchelder attends cockfights—something he can do only in the handful of states where they are still legal. Gory

## DOG DAYS

For the last five years, I've played drums in a rock band named Honus Wagner, but now it seems that we're breaking up, and I'm trying to reconcile myself to life without the drums. Of course, I can still play the drums by myself, which is a joy in much the same way shooting a basketball around by yourself is a joy, but it's not the same as playing in a real game. In order to console myself, I've been searching for reasons that not being in a band might be a good thing.



JOE DAVIS

Reasons not to be in a band: One is likely to acquire, as I have, a slight ringing in one's ears (especially if one is the drummer). One hears about money a great deal but rarely sees any. Then, there are fans, who can be a problem, or there are no fans, an even bigger problem.

Success would, on the surface, solve many of these problems, but, no matter how successful you are as a rock-and-roll musician, you must always contend with some Johnny-come-lately with a new haircut who is more popular than you, in spite of the fact that you think he is imitating you. Paul Westerberg must look with dismay at Nirvana, who are justifiably aghast that anyone would use the word "alternative" in connection with Pearl Jam, who in turn must have been tempted to consult lawyers about their apparent imitators Stone Temple Pilots.

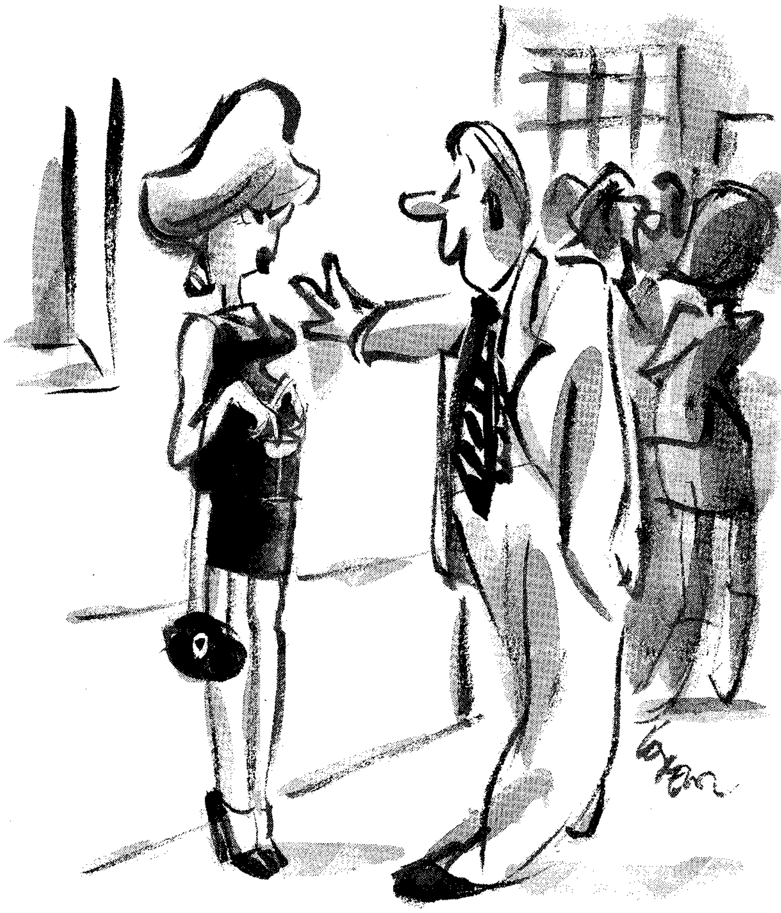
But the real area I've been focussing on in my attempt to dissuade myself of rock-and-roll aspirations is my instrument, the drums. Who in his right mind would want to be a drummer?

Reasons not to be a drummer: Up onstage, members of a rock band have license to behave as badly as they please—all except the drummer. He is the only one who must spend the whole time sitting down, as though in class. Among all the instruments of pop music, a drum set is the most cumbersome to move around, and also the least glamorous while in transit (as opposed to guitars). Whereas other musicians gain attention with interesting lyrics, catchy melodies, or, at the very least, an arresting stage presence, a drummer tends to get attention by being loud and bombastic and generally having a fit not unlike a temper tantrum in which all the pots and pans in the kitchen are thrown on the floor. This is a medium that often tends toward the unsophisticated, the primal, the animal.

In fact, in the context of a rock band, the behavior of a drummer bears some resemblance to the behavior we expect and appreciate in dogs. Dogs: reliable. Drummers: same. Dogs: fun and friendly, but capable of sudden and shocking acts of lewd behavior. Drummers: same. Dogs: playful and frolicsome until told to heel. Drummers: same. A dog will be scolded by his master for crapping on the new rug. A drummer will be scolded by the songwriter for continuing his raucous drumroll into the quiet part of the new song. (Whether or not a drummer will be scolded for actually crapping on the rug varies from one band to the next.) Then, there is the sad and unnerving fact that drummers, like dogs, seem to be susceptible to sudden fatalities involving cars or poison, or both. The former drummer for the band Motörhead has the right idea: his name is Phil but his nickname is Philthy Animal.

For anyone except Charlie Watts, it seems nearly impossible to play the drums in a rock band and have dignity. Logic and good taste dictate that this sort of life is to be avoided. The next time you see a band live, throw the drummer a bone. Would that I could be the one there to catch it!

—Thomas Beller



*"There's no, no in your eyes, but yes, yes in your pheromones."*

• •

pictures of the sport line his office walls. He is unapologetic about his hobby. "My father, who was an iceman, just north of Boston, was one of the greatest genetic breeders of roosters ever," he explains. "From the time I was eight, my job was to feed, water, and care for those roosters. As far as I'm concerned, roosters are the noblest animals God ever put on the earth. They just don't know how to quit. My dad used to tell me, 'Be as good as your rooster.' "

## BELLHOP

BELLHOPPING for New York hotels is not normally a cultural pursuit, although Tony Cichielo, who retired last month after forty-four years at the Algonquin, sometimes makes it sound that way. Tony started out running the back elevator and finished up as Bell Captain. His term of service was one of the longest stints that anyone has seen at the Algonquin. (A lobby waiter named John Maglaras has been with the hotel for forty-eight years and is still active.)

"There was a lot of train travel in the old days, and we used to get the big steamer trunks," Tony said, sitting in the hotel's little lobby one afternoon, a week or so before his last day. "We used to get Dana Andrews—if the man had fifteen pieces, it was nothing. Harpo Marx's family the same thing." Tony described William Faulkner, whom he used to show to his room, as a pink-faced gentleman with bright-white hair: "He drank by himself. He would lock himself in the room. He was one of those solitary drinkers, but in public the man was letter-perfect." Thornton Wilder was more kinetic: "I put him in a cab one day. He got out the other side, because he realized he had a car in the garage. The cab went down the block with both back doors open." Later, talking about tips, Tony said the biggest he ever got was a hundred-dollar bill, from the British playwright John Osborne.

Tony, telling his stories, looked a little like Sid Caesar: he had the same bunched-up, Roman features, the same fuzzy eyebrows and bent nose. He was wearing the uniform of his office—cuffed white shirt, black vest, and trousers with gold piping—and black shoes that were a little worn. "My father managed apartment buildings in the Village, but we grew up in Astoria, and Northport, Long Island," he said. "I went to William Cullen Bryant High School, in Queens, and won a scholarship to Oberlin College, but the Army took me the next day. Before joining the service, I used to do a lot of cartoon work. When the Army found out what a talented guy I was, they put me to work making posters. Everybody else can say he fought the Battle of the Bulge; I *made anti-venereal-disease posters.*"

Tony thought the Algonquin had had more bounce in the old days. Alec Waugh fell out of an elevator once, and Brendan Behan almost came to blows with Laurence Olivier. "I was sitting on the bench talking to Behan," Tony said. "Olivier walked by, and Behan said, 'There goes Sir Larry, the horse's ass.' It was the first time I ever saw Olivier lose his cool. The shoulders tightened, and he turned around. I said, 'I better do something.' " (The confrontation stopped there.) Not long before that, Tony kept Thelonious Monk from jumping off the hotel roof. "Monk had one foot off the top. I grabbed him by the shoulder. I said, 'Where are you going, Mr. Monk?' " He didn't know precisely why Thelonious Monk was up there in the first place; he just scratched his nose and said, "Thelonious Monk, what a guy."

It was matinée day at the theatres, so Tony had to get back to work, but first he made some final observations. "Guys are travelling with more shoes, more clothes, more everything. The guys from South America—Jesus, they bring tons." He missed seeing gentlemen in their evening clothes. "You knew they were going to the theatre. Now they go in dungarees, in sneakers, in jogging shoes." For years, he drove in to work from his home, on Long Island (he is a widower and has two grown children), but he thought that the city had decayed, and that he probably wouldn't be in town much after he retired. For one thing, cabbies used to help with the bags in the old days, and now most of them sat sullenly in the driver's seat, waiting for their trunks to be unloaded. "God had a bad day when he made a cabdriver, sir," Tony said, shaking his head. ♦

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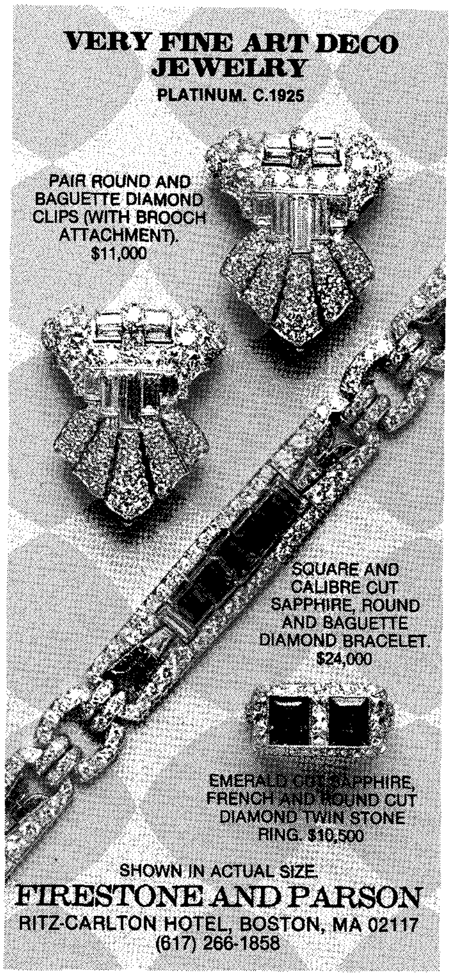

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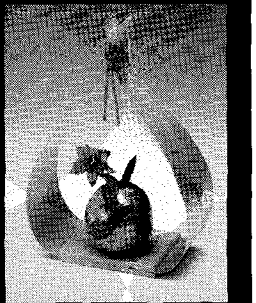


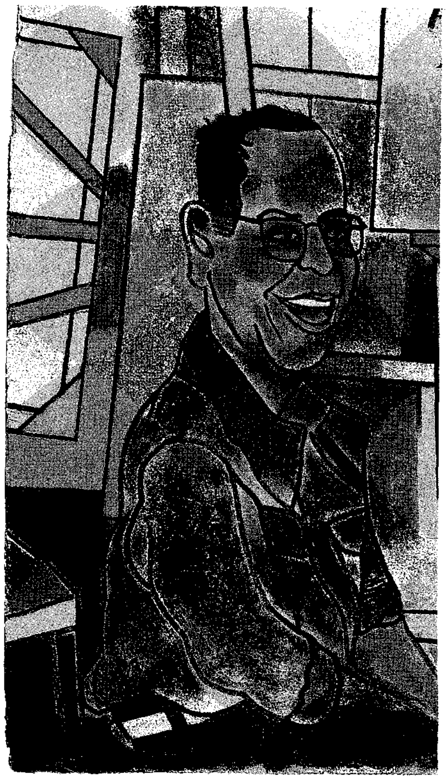
### ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

# GEORGE WOLFE IN PROGRESS

*How will the director handle Joe Papp's legacy? The launch of Wolfe's first fall season at the Public Theatre and the opening of Broadway's "Perestroika" offer clues.*

BY ARTHUR LUBOW

A GOOD director screens out the static, so that the signal comes over clear and strong. George C. Wolfe has been very well directed. His edges are fuzz-free. His hair is cropped close, his body is thin, his eyes are wide open behind wire-framed round spectacles. He wears exquisite shirts and tennis shoes. His voice is a modulated honk. He is always moving. Even sitting down, he seems to vibrate. I have a postcard of Jiminy Cricket in top hat and white gloves at the window of a candy store, arms outstretched and eyes popping. When I see Wolfe, I think of that postcard. He is an animated character.



*Papp felt strongly that Wolfe could head his own theatre with his own vision.*

RICHARD MERKIN

One day this summer, he taped two notes, scrawled in red ink on orange cards, to the door of his office, at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre. "It's exhausting being fabulous," the first read. And, below, "Especially when it's a full time job." It's a joke, but he's not kidding. (A couple of weeks later, his secretary replaced the cards with a printed sign bearing the same message.) "Being fabulous" is a good job description for Wolfe's new position as the producer of the New York Shakespeare Festival. Or, to put it more sociologically, his task is to restore charismatic leadership to an organization that ever since Joseph Papp's death, in October, 1991, has floundered without it.

You reach Wolfe's office through a door on Lafayette Street next to the main entrance to the Public Theatre. Once the receptionist buzzes, you are in a maze of rooms, staircases, and hallways which confounds architectural logic. To get to a toilet, for example, Wolfe must leave his private office, walk through an outer office to the foyer, and then, following a path of ratty white carpet remnants mounted on old black linoleum, circumnavigate the Anspacher, one of the Public's five theatres, to reach an open space painted hospital green and offering, among other amenities, two rest rooms. The building is the former Astor Library, which was rescued from demolition by Papp with great fanfare in the mid-sixties and retrofitted into the most famous nonprofit theatre in America. It's a testament to Papp's gumption, his urban spirit, his flair (as he showed with Shakespeare) for turning something beautiful and old into something marvellously new. Without him, however, the inefficient layout, the undersized theatres, the rumbling subway, the erratic office air-conditioning, and innumerable other impracticalities glare in high relief. The building seems all bumps and barnacles, a shell that formed around Papp and makes no sense without him. The top staff, too, is tied to Papp. The managing director, Jason Steven Cohen, was hired by Papp in 1972; one of the two associate producers, Rosemarie Tichler, was hired by Papp in 1974; the director of ticket services, Alison Harper, was hired by Papp in

1967. In early June, Wolfe told a colleague, "I wish I had a stick of dynamite, so I could blow this place up and start all over again."

But a theatre administrator, like a director, replaces each piece gingerly, aware that the structure may unexpectedly topple. When I first met Wolfe, at the Walter Kerr Theatre last April, he was in rehearsals for "Millennium Approaches," the first part of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America." (The second part, "Perestroika," starts previews next month.) Wolfe was relighting one scene and then tinkering with the set. During a break, I remarked on how each change dictated a subsequent change. "Exactly," he said. "It's like one of my favorite stories. In the Hawaiian Islands, one of the Polynesian kings had died. His wife was next in line to replace him, and she said, 'You know that rule where all the women eat after the men? I don't think that's very interesting. Let's get rid of that. Everyone will eat at the same time.' Because of that one change, society had a nervous breakdown. That's one of the theories of why Cook was so successful in taking over the islands, because they were in chaos when he got there." He laughed—a big laugh that started in his narrow chest and pealed like a bell. "That's what's happening here now."

Wolfe is a doggedly sequential director. Rather than tackle the biggest problems first, he begins at the beginning, and only when he is satisfied with that will he go on to the next scene. As time runs out, his collaborators squirm. "You're gripping your seat, wondering if you're going to get the angel fixed—which is the last thing in the play—before the critics come," Kushner said just before "Millennium" opened, last May. "He literally got to it the afternoon the critics came." Wolfe approaches the revitalization of the Public Theatre in the same spirit. After the board of the New York Shakespeare Festival abruptly fired JoAnne Akalaitis last March and hired Wolfe to take Papp's title of producer, the organization idled like a car awaiting a new driver. All the departments—literary, development, marketing, press—needed direction, but Wolfe, who was then preoccupied with the "Millennium" rehearsals, couldn't provide it. Once he settled in, early in May, he ignored his business and development staff, so that with his artistic associates he could plan next season's schedule. "It's like building a body," he said. "Right now, I've been assessing the head. Later, I'll do the torso. Then it'll be the limbs." At times while he perfected the nose, though, the lower body appeared to be hemorrhaging. Not until mid-August, with the imminent fall season tingling in the air, did he turn his attention to reaching subscribers and other ticket buyers.

What he hoped to achieve at the Public Theatre I could see occurring, on a small scale, in the gradual transformation of his private office. "This office is like a dungeon," he said not long after he moved into it. It's a small room that is indeed proportioned like an oubliette, with a double-height ceiling and two arched windows way overhead. The major piece of furniture is a huge wooden desk, almost as wide as the room. Wolfe sits behind it. "When JoAnne was here, she had the desk facing the wall," he remarked. "A coup could be coming and she didn't want to know about it. I want to see the troops coming." Along with the desk, he inherited a couple of director's chairs, a scuffed black wooden coffee table, and a black sofa that would be at home in a college-dorm room. In May, the office was cluttered with Wolfe's decorations, including African figurines and a poster from his first Broadway show, "Jelly's Last Jam," and with detritus, like two vases of dying flowers and an unplugged floor fan. Over the summer, things changed. Junk like the fan disappeared quickly. The chairs and table made way in August for a pair of oak-and-brass-nailed leather chairs and a matching oak table. The flowers were now reliably fresh. Above the couch was a makeready grid of the coalescing season schedule for the different theatres—file cards marked with plays and their directors, taped to the wall. As the room became more orderly and pared down, I noticed things that had always been there but had escaped my attention, such as a framed photograph of Wolfe and Papp on a trip to Warsaw in 1989.

I was reminded of something that Robin Wagner, the set designer who worked with Wolfe on "Jelly" and "Angels," had told me: "With George, anything on the stage has to make its place felt. Everything gets distilled down to whatever comment he's making visually. You can litter the stage with props, but it's like littering the text with words: unless they're in a certain order and making sense, there's no point." Wolfe likes to have his designers provide him with an excess of material, which he can then whittle away. "Michael Bennett used to say, 'You make the instruments, I'll play them,'" Wagner said. "That's what George wants—all the possibilities." Wagner worked on seven shows with Bennett, and he sees a number of similarities between the two directors. "George doesn't think of the stage as trying to create a site, or geographical place," he said. "It's about an event. That's something he shares with Michael. The more you make the audience work, the more involved they become. If you give them enough of a line, they'll fill it with color."

I became used to Wolfe's collaborators' likening him to the greatest artists they had worked with. "He's a lot like Bob Fosse in his ability to have darkness be as tangible as the areas of light," the lighting designer Jules Fisher said. "In 'Jelly,' the blackness for George was a character. He wanted every scene we put onstage to be encapsulated by this void, a blackness that you could imagine went on forever. Another way he's like Bob Fosse is that he has a real sense of how motion-picture techniques can be used in the theatre—for example, how a face can appear out of nowhere with pinpoint lighting, or the fluidity with which he goes from one scene to another." But when Luther Henderson, a composer and musical adapter, brought up the creative giant in his own work history, I thought he was making a larger equation, one that subsumed the others. "I liken him to a leader like Duke Ellington, who was supposed to be a 'jazz composer' but had in his orchestra Cootie Williams and Johnny Hodges and so forth—these people who were part and parcel of his composition," Henderson said. "Like Ellington, he pulls people through his thoughts. In turn, we push him through. You get the feeling that nobody but you could have done this for George."

This push and pull is what Wolfe calls "a tribal dynamic, where I'm running it but we're all a part of it." Like a great editor or politician, he has the knack of assessing someone's talents and calling forth his best work. One afternoon in July, the director of play development, Morgan Jenness, a blond woman in her mid-thirties, wearing bluejeans and very old sneakers, brought into Wolfe's office Philip Kan Gotanda, a plump Asian-American playwright dressed in a splashy

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black-and-white shirt and black shorts. Joking and laughing, Wolfe asked what Gotanda, who lives in California, had been doing in New York. He inquired after mutual acquaintances. He said teasingly that Jenness had described a short film of Gotanda's to him in excruciating detail. Then he turned the conversation to Gotanda's play "In the Dominion of Night: Featuring Joe Ozu and the New Orientals," which he and Jenness had been analyzing that morning.

"I thought the play was very interesting, very interesting," he began.

Gotanda smiled with gratification.

Then Wolfe remarked that the Orientals who enter the play disappear well before the end, and somehow that makes the play "less dangerous." He told Gotanda, "It takes away some of the edge. Do you know what I'm saying?"

Gotanda said he thought he did.

"When I began it, I went, 'Oh really, oh *really, oh really*,' " Wolfe continued, *talking fast now and demonstrating with* his rising volume level his ascending interest. "And then it became 'Oh *really*, oh . . . really.' " His diminuendo sank to the inaudible. "It went from being intimate to being even smaller. And I thought it was going to either open up or become even more painfully intimate."

Gotanda nodded. "I think I understand," he said. "I think the rewrites I'm working on will take care of some of that."

"Great," Wolfe said, beaming. "Great."

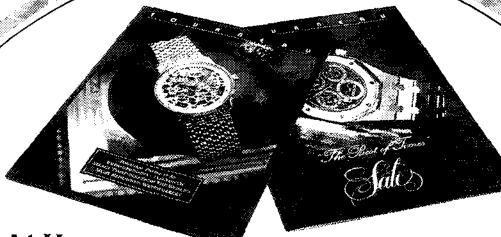
People will tell you how exceptionally articulate a director Wolfe is, but what they are describing is not (in theatrical terms) his text but his performance. He speaks an idiosyncratic lingo reminiscent of a beginning-reader book in which the author limits himself to two hundred vocabulary words. Wolfe's favorite words—"party," "dynamic," "journey," "fascinating," "elegant," "vision," "rhythm," "energy"—recur frequently. They are pointers, not markers, and they depend upon Wolfe's delivery for their meaning and their impact. The distinction hit me the second time I saw "Jelly's Last Jam," the musical that established Wolfe's commercial reputation. He both directed it and wrote the book. Telling the story of Jelly Roll Morton, a jazz composer who advanced an African-American art form but reviled his African-American roots, Wolfe conceived the musical as a Judgment Day on which Morton, guided by an underworld m.c. known as Chimney Man, relives his past and recognizes his errors. It is what Wolfe refers to as Jelly's "journey," but the dust is blown off that stale word by a brilliant production design featuring a progress through a series of doors: the Dogon door through which Chimney Man appears, the fanlight door of Jelly's respectable Creole grandmother, bare pine barroom doorframes, cattle-car doors, a beaded-string roadhouse door, cool pink neon rectangles in Harlem, closed office doors marked "Private." By inhabiting an abstract, clichéd word, Wolfe reinvented it. The staging and the performances were so vivid that not until a second visit did I concentrate on the words. From Chimney Man's opening declaration that Morton "drinks from the vine of syncopation but denies the black soil from which this rhythm was born" to his girlfriend's last-minute appeal to Jelly, "Admit your *pain n' quit treatin'* people like they was dirt," Wolfe's book is programmatic and didactic, an empty vessel waiting for Wolfe the director to breathe life into it.

Like a script, Wolfe's spoken words can't be judged by how they read on the page. On March 16th, the day after the board announced his appointment, he made his first address to the Shakespeare Festival staff. (He travelled downtown from the "Millennium" rehearsals and, characteristically, arrived forty-five minutes late.) Since the board had just booted out Akalaitis, some spectators expected to hear a new credo. They were surprised. "He expressed his vision, and the words were the same as JoAnne's," someone who was there recalls. Akalaitis, of course, was not there, yet she agrees that on paper she and Wolfe are in accord. "We both believe in new plays," she says. "We believe in artists. We believe in artists of color. We believe in classics and in visionary productions of classic texts. It's common sense. No one but an idiot would say, 'We want to do nothing but oldies and goldies and put stars in them and move them to Broadway.' " Yet, except for a few diehard Akalaitis loyalists, the staff members went away excited by their first meeting with producer Wolfe. They were dazzled by his enthusiasm, by his quick wit, by his easy rapport with all sorts of people, by what one calls "his mind-heart connection.” The similarities in text were beside the point. The staff was mesmerized by the production.

“It was very fascinating to me that in all the articles about ‘Angels’ and all the articles about the Public Theatre the fact that I am black was really not discussed,” Wolfe told me. We were sitting in the living room of his apartment, in the West Nineties, surrounded by his collection of black folk art. It was early May, the critics had just seen “Millennium,” and he was about to start work at the Public. His success had dissolved the Homeric epithet: he was no longer the black director or the black writer George Wolfe but simply the director and writer George Wolfe. At thirty-eight, he was wondering what it might mean to leave those racial definitions behind.

He had been concerned when first the *Village Voice* and then the *Times* reported that he was gay. His fear, he told me, was that the news of his sexual orientation would obscure his racial identity. “The fact that I was a director of color directing this play was the most important banner I wanted to wave,” he said. “Because I’m breaking a boundary there. Whereas, if the sexuality is stressed, that excuses on a certain level the racial thing. I was concerned that, O.K., I spend the last *x* number of years of my life being a *black* director, whatever I do. I go to the street corner and I’m a black director. Now I’m doing ‘Angels in America,’ so I’m a gay director? That bothers me. I think I am the first person of color to direct a major white play on Broadway. In 1993? That’s astounding to me. And horrifying to me. I just didn’t want that to get lost in the mix.”

The previous summer, after the Broadway success of “Jelly’s Last Jam,” he had returned to his home town of Frankfort, Kentucky, for George C. Wolfe Week. He didn’t recall feeling oppressed by segregation while he was growing up, but, as the returning hero, he felt the childhood emotions flooding back. “It was so interesting, walking into these tiny little shops and going, ‘What was so precious here that a little six-year-old boy couldn’t touch, couldn’t walk inside of?’ ” he said. “Or the Capitol Theatre—they wouldn’t let me go in there? Oh, it’s a parking lot now? *Good.* The first eleven years of my life came rushing back to me with a certain sort of rage. I



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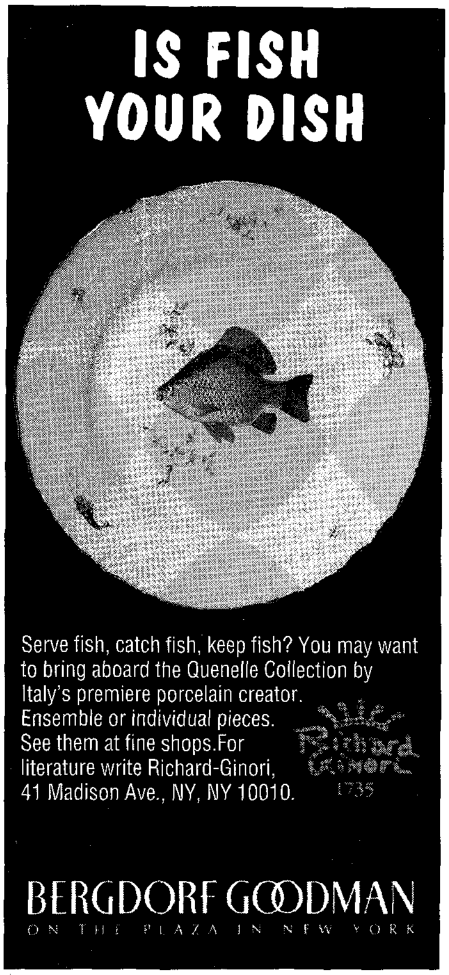

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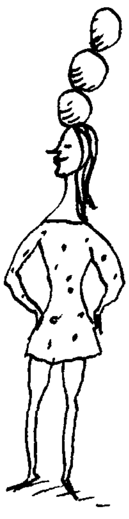
thought, I'll show you. And it wasn't George Wolfe showing you. It was a little black boy showing you."

His father was a government clerk, his mother a teacher and, later, principal at an all-black private school that George attended. But, as the youngest of three children (a fourth died in infancy), he may have been affected most by his maternal grandmother, Addie President, who was a retired nurse. One winter, just after his mother started teaching, he stayed most nights at Miss Addie's house, five doors down from his. "I have this vision that she was whispering to me in my sleep," he said. "She made me feel that no one could think about harming me." Her vigilant love was a child-size suit of armor, to which he has added bucklers and breastplates over the years.

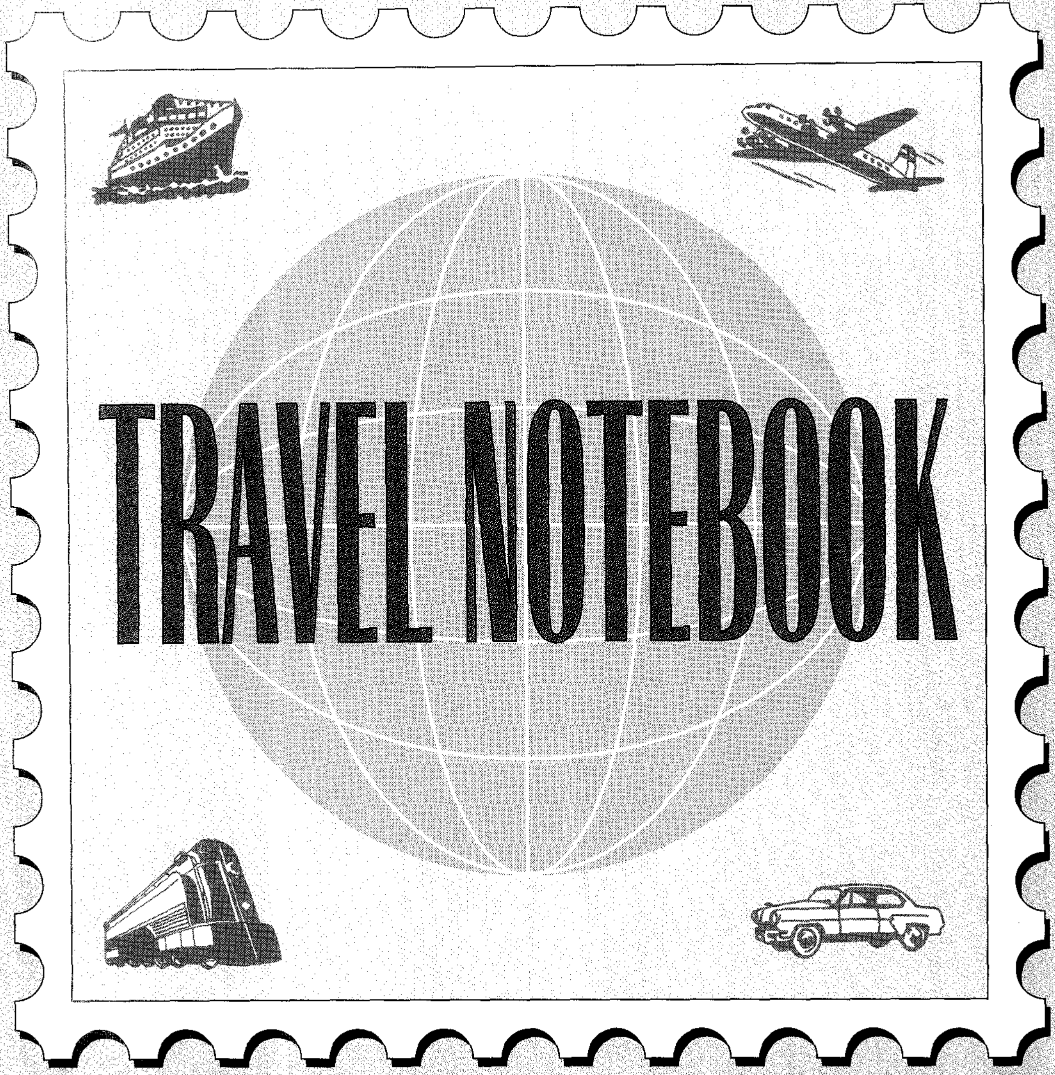
"He's not an open book, and he lets you know that," Kushner, who worked intimately with Wolfe for four months preparing "Millennium" for Broadway, says. "He's very protected and defended. It's the thing that Vermeer does in all his pictures, putting a chair or table between you and the woman to let you know that you can look but not touch. Some of it is the culture. What informs George is primarily an African-American thing: 'I am. I'm not a black empty space in a white world. I have boundaries. You have to let me know you'll treat me as a person. If you do, I'll think about letting down the boundaries.' "



Wolfe's exuberant charm is protective, like a high-voltage fence. In any recounting of his family's history—not just by him, but also by his parents and by his sister, Elayne McNeil—the recurring theme is the demand for respect in a white society. George's grandmother threatened a white insurance agent with an iron when he failed to remove his hat in her house. George's mother was less confrontational but equally proud: if a white salesman patronizingly called her "Anna," she would scheme to find out his wife's name, so that at their next meeting she could say, "How's *Doris* doing?" George says that he grew up as "a Negro—someone who was constructed so as to fit into the structures of white society." He was taught to hide his feelings beneath "a nice Negro façade," to "wear a face." He says, "It's not pride, it's not arrogance. It's being on guard."

He left Frankfort for good when he transferred from Kentucky State University, then an all-black college that his brother and sister had attended, to Pomona College, in Southern California, to major in theatre. His chief undergraduate accomplishment was a play, "Up for Grabs," that he wrote and directed. "Up for Grabs" follows a young black man, raised in a soundproofed box, as he passes through doors and metamorphoses into a corporate executive, a "Shaft" superhero, and a revolutionary. A satire about the "journey" of an African-American cut off from his ancestors and his culture, "Up for Grabs" is unmistakably Wolfean. Unlike most other young black playwrights, Wolfe shunned naturalistic family dramas. After graduation, he wrote and staged surreal, highly theatrical fables at the multiracial Inner City Cultural Center in Los Angeles. In 1979, he moved to New York with letters to the heads of the two major black theatres, the Negro Ensemble Company and the New Federal Theatre, but they had nothing for him. His first professional production in New York, "Paradise," started as a student project in the New York University musical-theatre program; he wrote the book and lyrics. It was staged in late 1985 at Playwrights Horizons, a great coup—and then it was flattened by the critics. "I was not prepared for the reviews," Wolfe said. "I can quote them: 'The best directing the director could have done was put a sign on the door saying "Do not enter." ' It was very painful. I had a six-week period of 'Can't go on, stormy weather.' " Then he was informed that his play "The Colored Museum" had won a national playwriting contest and would be produced the following spring at the Crossroads Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

"The Colored Museum" is a satirical look at the stereotypes of African-American life which pervade American culture. "Paradise," too, was intended as a satire, about a buffoonish white family that tries to colonize a mythical Caribbean island. But "Paradise" was, with Wolfe's consent, softened by the director, and Wolfe later felt that he had compromised in the hope of increasing the size of his audience. That fall, "The



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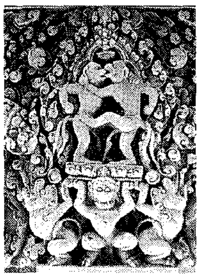

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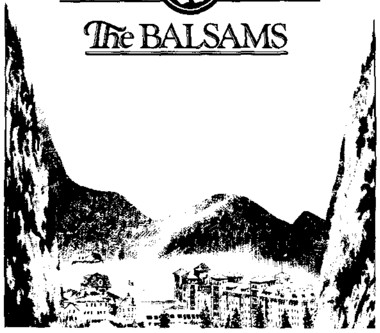

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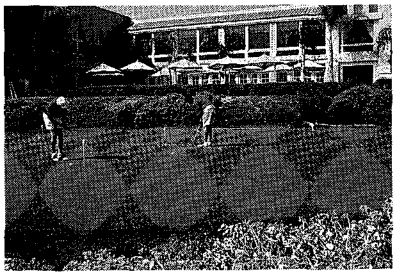

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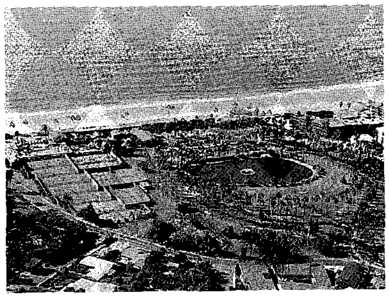

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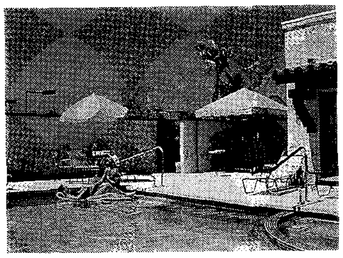

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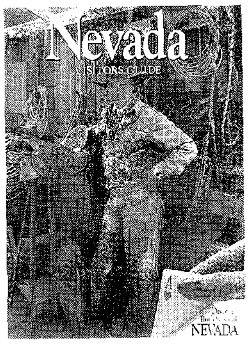

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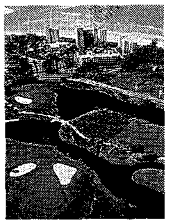

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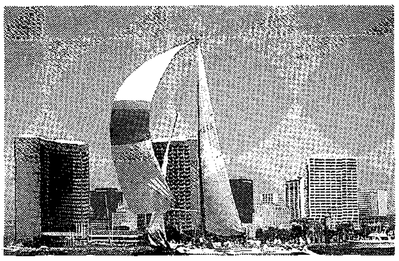

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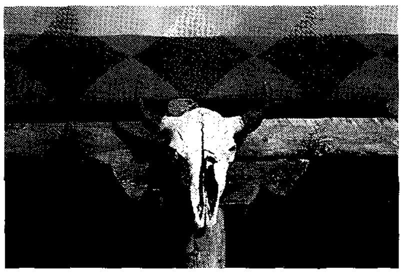

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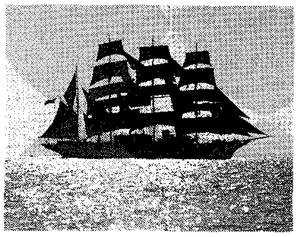

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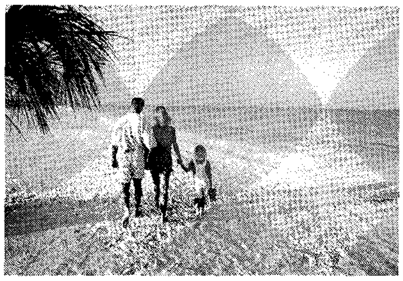

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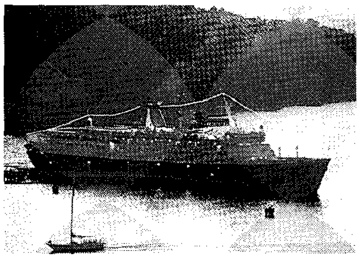

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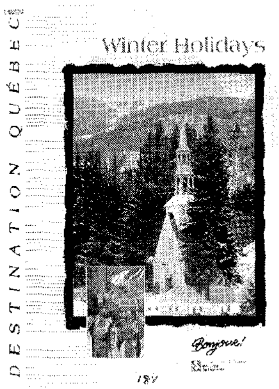

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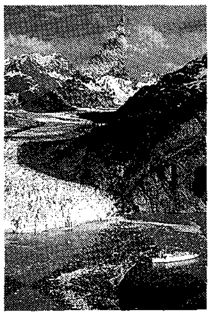

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Colored Museum," which he had written without commercial design, was brought by Papp to the Public Theatre and had great critical and popular success. Wolfe drew the obvious lesson: he would write what he wanted, and he would fight to direct it himself. Over the next few years, he directed "Spunk," his own adaptation of three Zora Neale Hurston stories; he drafted—and then, after quarrelling with the producer, abandoned—a libretto for "Queenie Pie," Duke Ellington's unfinished opera; he directed, at the Public, a version of Brecht's "Caucasian Chalk Circle" which transposed it to a black island resembling Haiti; also at the Public, he produced the Festival of New Voices, providing a platform for nonwhite solo artists such as Anna Deavere Smith and John Leguizamo; he wrote a screenplay about Josephine Baker; and he worked on "Jelly's Last Jam," first as the book writer and then as the director, too. "Jelly" propelled him from the eddies of the downtown art scene into the commercial mainstream, but he was still, despite his captain's stripes, restricted to African-American ports of call. It was only last December, when he was offered the most touted new play of our day, that Wolfe knocked down the color barrier.

Unhappy with the Los Angeles production of "Angels in America," Kushner sought a new director. Wolfe was suggested to him by Margo Lion and Jujamcyn Theatres, two of the producers of "Jelly's Last Jam," who were now hoping to snare "Angels." At their initial meeting, Wolfe, who had seen the play only once and with no thought of any professional involvement, won Kushner over with his perceptions. "Angels" opens with the funeral of an old Jewish woman, whose grandson, Louis Ironson, neglected to visit her during the last decade. As the play develops, a lot happens: Louis abandons a lover with AIDS; a repressed homosexual Mormon lawyer named Joe Pitt separates from his wife; and Roy Cohn battles AIDS symptoms and disbarment proceedings. Wolfe said that the entire play was about the woman in the coffin. "You wake up one day and you find yourself disconnected from your source," he explained. "You wake up one day and you find that you're Louis and that that woman, Sarah Ironson, is dead. She's gone and all her secrets are gone. You find yourself in a situation that is much larger than you, which is death, and you don't know how to survive, because your parents sure as hell didn't know, because they didn't listen to her, because she was speaking with a funny accent and they were busy trying to become Americans. They were dropping and changing the ends of their names so they could get invited to that party. So then you come along and your parents have no secrets. They only know how to fit in, and they train you how to do it better. But Sarah's dead. And you find yourself in a situation where you don't know what to do next, because you lost touch with some of those ancient truths."

For Wolfe, the play revealed how links between generations are lost in the assimilation process. (It could sit on the same shelf as "The Colored Museum" and "Jelly's Last Jam.") Although Kushner had never seen his play through that filter, he responded fervently. "He was picking up on the things that were really important in the play," he told me. "It rang true to me."

Wolfe's insight into the individual characters also impressed Kushner. For instance, he grasped instinctively how an actor should play the Mormon Joe Pitt, whose bottled-up emotions might suggest a performance of one-note stolidity. "His understanding was that Joe was a shape shifter, transforming himself into something else in each scene," Kushner said. "That he was not a monolith but, instead, had a constant series of masks that he was putting on. What was inside was chaotic and tortured, but it cracked through very rarely." Wolfe saw Joe as someone who must don different disguises to satisfy definitions that others impose on him. He saw him as a kind of Negro.

During a break one day in "Millennium" rehearsals, Wolfe said, "You find yourself with the challenge of claiming someone's rhythms without colonizing them. The production should exist somewhere in the space between Tony's head and my head." He meant that he had uncovered in Kushner's play themes that he identified with intellectually. *Intellectually*, it's important to emphasize, because Wolfe's enthusiasms, while they grow out of his individual background and experiences, are cerebral and astringently unsentimental. Wolfe's art, like Wolfe himself, enthralls the audience but always maintains a distance. "Jelly" is

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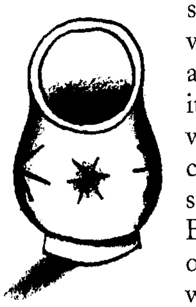
fascinating and disturbing, but it is not moving. In his production of "Millennium," too, the emotional aspects of the play are tightly controlled. Jack Viertel, the creative director of Jujamcyn Theatres, said in explaining why he wanted Wolfe as a director for "Angels," "We knew he would deëmphasize some of the sentimental values of the play and emphasize the hard-edged brilliance of the writing. It would have a very stylish look and clearly articulated text, and it would have its darknesses and its delineated points of light. His inclination is to move away from the naturalistic to a stylized world."



The tension in any production that Wolfe is developing arises from his obligation to reach out to an audience and his recoil from any hint of pandering to one. During "Jelly" previews, he battled with the star, Gregory Hines, who wanted his character to be more appealing and his numbers to be more rousing. The showdown came at a late-night post-performance meeting that Hines called in his harshly lit dressing room for Wolfe; the lyricist, Susan Birkenhead; and the composer, Henderson. True to form, Wolfe was modifying the show with chesslike deliberation. Hines had a list of changes that he wanted put in *now*. Wolfe paced in agitation and explained once again why he worked the way he did. It was Henderson who sliced through the dangerously heavy atmosphere. "I take my orders from one person—Mr. Wolfe," he said. "Me, too," Birkenhead said. A coup had been suppressed, and Wolfe had reasserted control of the show—but more than that had happened. For one thing, Wolfe gave in to some of Hines's demands, rewriting several scenes. More important, the dispute wasn't swept under the rug. It fuelled the anger of Hines's performance. In the same way, Wolfe's directive that the chorus members paint white lips on their black faces for a coon dance to end the first act provoked tears, rage, and protest—all of which could be seen in the number. By plotting how to make the audience uncomfortable, Wolfe made his cast uncomfortable and insured that "Jelly" would pack a visceral wallop far from the tap and patter of an all-black Broadway revue.

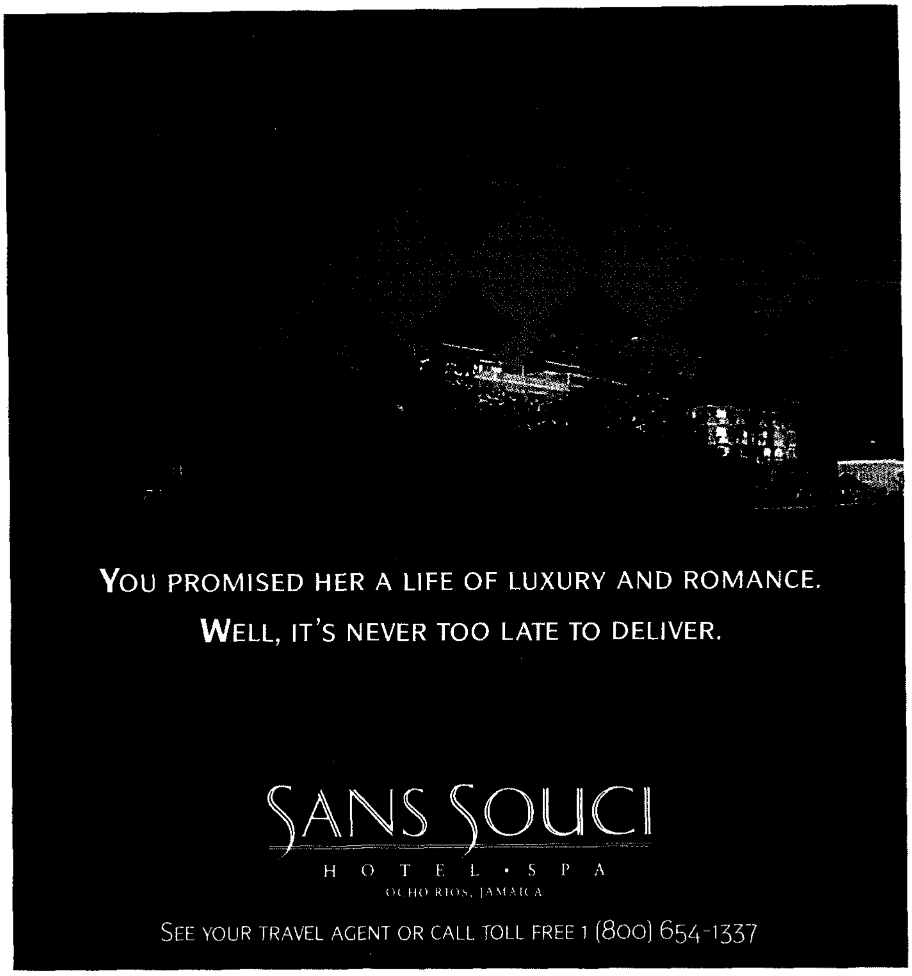
The conventional way to connect with an audience—by tugging at its heartstrings—he shuns. The major disagreement during "Millennium" previews concerned the music, which Kushner felt was too off-putting. Wolfe compromised, but only so far. For instance, he was willing to use a romantic standard for a lovers' dance; but instead of "Moon River," a tune that was in earlier productions, he chose "Skylark," a song that is vaguely familiar without being instantly recognizable. It may be more elegant, but it's less effective. "The extent to which George Wolfe is commercial—meaning hundreds of thousands of people coming into a Broadway theatre—is a function of the collaborators he is working with," the co-producer Margo Lion said. "George needs to work with people who are his intellectual equals but are not afraid to show their emotional side."

Wolfe's overriding instinct is for clarity, for making the abstract visible. "The world doesn't see a lot of gray," he once told the actor Tommy Hollis. "The world sees black and white, and then it understands." His mind is so logical and orderly that I was puzzled on learning that he is fascinated by spiritualism, which seemed to be a willful plunge into primitivism by a man who felt too antiseptically intellectual. In New York, Wolfe consults regularly with a Puerto Rican woman called Candy, who lives in the Parkchester housing project in the Bronx and conducts private readings. In Bahia, which has become his favorite holiday destination, he once watched old women possessed by spirits dancing manically, and he visited a woman who, by throwing cowrie shells, told him which African and East Indian gods are his special protectors. All this began to make sense to me after he described a day in Bahia when, sitting in a restaurant and bouncing his head in time to the music, he noticed a throng of little boys pointing at him and laughing. He realized after a few minutes that all the other black people in the room were swaying their whole bodies. The children were mocking the way he was moving only his head. The allure of Bahia is that among the descendants of slaves who were able to keep their African culture more or less intact he can see what has been processed out of black Americans.

And the appeal of spiritualists is their apparent power to communicate with his dead ancestors. It's all in the cause of greater clarity. He wants to make his origins tangible.

In a library alcove off his living room he keeps his collection of family photographs. A framed oval portrait of Miss Addie holds the place of honor. He has an obsessive interest in his ancestors. His knowledge of what they had to surrender and what they retained stiffens his spine. He told me how moved he was by a photograph of his great-great-great-grandmother, who came to this country as a slave. "You have no idea what that did to the way I walk," he said. "You have no idea what that did. How that said, 'O.K., I have a right to be.'" The family portraits will go with him when he eventually finds time to move to an apartment closer to the Public. The rest of his art collection is under review. "There's too much *junk* in here," he said that afternoon in May. "It's brilliant, wonderful, stunning junk in here, but I need more space. I need to clean out some of it. I feel that somehow that's happening in my whole life. In certain respects, I'm getting to know my other selves, other than my racial self. I think I'm having to let go of a lot of stuff that's no longer essential."

In mid-August, just before he switched to a part-time schedule at the Public and began rehearsing "Perestroika," Wolfe fired four staffers who, among them, had almost a century of experience with the Shakespeare Festival. One, Barbara Carroll, was for many years Papp's personal assistant, and, as much as anyone, embodied continuity with the past. The Shakespeare Festival was often described as a dysfunctional family, with Joe Papp and his wife, Gail Merrifield Papp, who ran the literary department, as father and mother, and with everyone else competing for Joe's attention. While I was talking to the managing director, Steve Cohen, in his office one afternoon, Wolfe walked in, wanting to show Cohen his revisions of a new organizational chart. (Two days later, on the basis of this analysis, he fired the unlucky four.) Cohen had been surprised when, at their first meeting, in March, which lasted three hours, Wolfe started sketching such a chart. Now he was putting the final touches on a map delineating who



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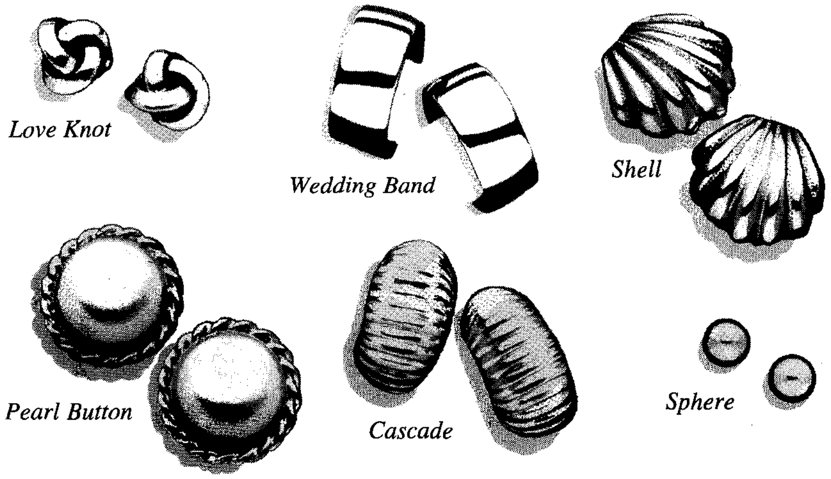

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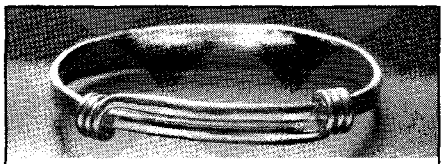
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did what and who reported to whom. "There never was an organizational chart, in the thirty-eight years of this institution," Cohen told me. To illustrate what he meant, he suggested that each of us, as an exercise, draw such a plan. As I was doodling a flow chart with boxes and arrows, trying to determine levels of subordination, Cohen showed me his version. It was a circle, with all spokes leading directly to the center. That, I thought, was life under Papp.

Papp, while dying of cancer, devised a dual leadership, in which the artistic director, Akalaitis, and Cohen, who was then called the producing director, shared responsibility. Such an arrangement exists at many nonprofit theatres. It didn't work at the New York Shakespeare Festival. "I think Joe had created an interim Papp, like an interim Pope," Robin Wagner, who is a board member, quipped. Part of the problem was that Akalaitis and Cohen viewed each other with contempt. But, beyond that, the Shakespeare Festival had never been a functioning machine; it had been an instrument serving Papp. "People were not encouraged to be inspired or to have ideas," Akalaitis said. "They were encouraged to be loyal." Fed by royalties from "A Chorus Line," the Shakespeare Festival had by the mid-eighties swelled enormously, owning its own production-design shops, employing as many as six hundred people, taking in as much as thirty-five million dollars a year. When the "Chorus Line" revenues dried up, the organization shrank, without anyone rethinking what its role should be.

Once Papp was gone, the board of the Shakespeare Festival began rethinking its own role. "The board was Joe's creature," Larry E. Condon, who is the chairman of the executive committee, said. "When you have a strong leader like Joe, he tells the board what to do. It was Joe's show all the way." Last September, almost a year after his death, the board held a retreat to figure out where it stood. During the retreat, it asked Akalaitis to draw up a statement of mission. "We asked for a mission statement in September," Condon said. "We didn't have one in January. If you're the artistic director, you have to build support. Your job isn't just to put on plays." The news that came to the board last fall was mostly bad: a direct-mail campaign for donations was disappointing; "Angels in America," which had seemed headed for the Public, went directly to Broadway instead; no Shakespeare production was scheduled for the Public that season; many board members felt that Akalaitis's program was restricted to her own artsy downtown taste. There was a sense of drift and dissension. Students of modern European history will recognize the signs: the board yearned for a leader.

On December 5th, flying out with Wolfe to Los Angeles to see the last performance of "Angels in America," Wagner asked the director, "What do you really want to do, ultimately?"

"I want my own theatre," Wolfe replied.

"How would you feel about running a theatre like the Public?" Wagner went on.

"That would be perfect!" Wolfe said.

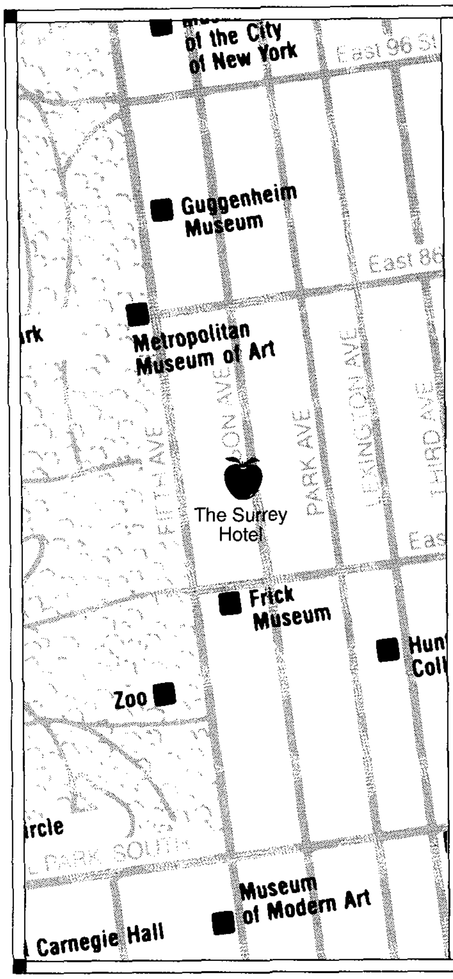
Wagner took it upon himself, without his candidate's knowledge, to let the executive committee of the board know that Wolfe might be available for the job. "Once George indicated that he was interested, we all quickly came to agreement on him," Condon said. A series of secret meetings, with conversation couched in conditional form ("If the position were to become available . . ."), worked out the details: as producer, Wolfe would have sole control, with powers—including hiring and firing—never granted to Akalaitis. The meetings with Wolfe had to be arranged at late hours, because the director was increasingly enmeshed in rehearsals for "Millennium Approaches."

That Wolfe had been chosen in late December to direct "Angels," a politically charged, very high-profile play with prospects of achieving commercial as well as critical success, did not escape the notice of the board. It was precisely the sort of play the board longed for. No one could fairly fault Akalaitis for failing to land it: the decision was Kushner's, and was based largely on the physical limitations of the Public's largest stage. And, anyway, the play had been developed at the Mark Taper Forum, in Los Angeles. But the credit only enhanced Wolfe's reputation as someone who felt as much at home on Broadway as he did on Lafayette Street (a reputation further enhanced when he won a Tony for his direction of "Millennium" in June). "George talks about theatre the way I talk about theatre," Akalaitis told me.

"The difference is he's the director of 'Jelly's Last Jam' and 'Angels in America,' and I'm the director of ''Tis Pity She's a Whore' and 'In the Summer House.' "

The circumstances of how Wolfe came to direct "Angels" suggest a larger difference between them. When "Angels" was offered to Wolfe, he had a conflicting commitment to direct Jose Rivera's play "Marisol" in a Hartford Stage Company production that was bound for the Public. After much tortured debate with his conscience, he wriggled out of it. He said that he couldn't pass up the artistic challenge and the symbolic racial breakthrough. But some theatre artists, Akalaitis among them, were appalled that he had reneged on a promise to a nonprofit theatre so that he could direct a Broadway show. Akalaitis told me, "I feel that when the nonprofit theatre starts acting like Hollywood, it's lost. Theatre art is not business as usual."

Akalaitis and Wolfe had both been artistic associates at the Public under Papp, and they had never hit it off. (Not long before her dismissal, Akalaitis blackballed Wolfe's nomination to the board.) Personal chemistry aside, however, they have different views of art and of commerce. When I said to Akalaitis that people viewed her administration as rigorously anticommercial, she protested by rattling off her ideas for developing the Delacorte Theatre, in Central Park, where the Festival puts on two Shakespeare productions a summer. "I thought the Delacorte should be rented out for weddings and bar mitzvahs," she said. "I wanted to have a restaurant at the Delacorte." Her vision extended to Lafayette Street. "I wanted to have a movie house at the Public with a marquee," she continued. "And I felt that the theatre should be open twenty-four hours a day and be full first of all with plays but also with A.A. meetings and community-board meetings. It's not that I'm against enterprise. I wanted to take over the neighborhood—turn the parking lot across the street into a sculpture garden with the Whitney, make the neighborhood a cultural area where tourists could come." Behind all these projects, however, is a philosophy that the theatrical productions themselves are sacrosanct, enclosed as in a reliquary amid all this bustle of Mammon. When you talk to Wolfe, you get a different im-



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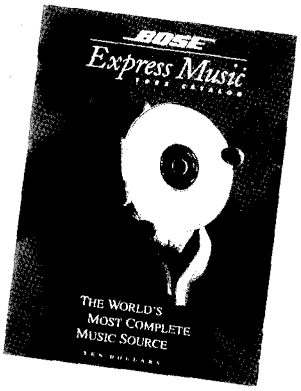

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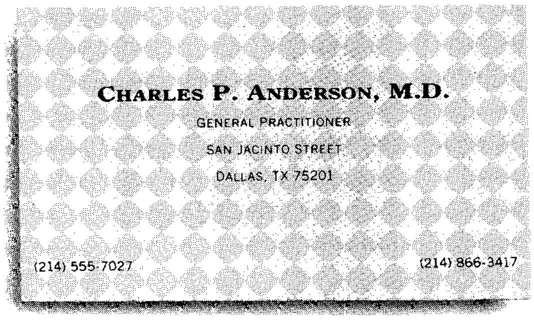
*"We adopted a highway, but it's just not the same thing."*

pression. One of his first personnel decisions was to hire Wiley Hausam, his agent at I.C.M., to work full time at the Public to exploit film, television, recording, and other rights to plays produced there. (Though Wolfe had called for an ethnically diverse staff, three of his first four appointments are white, and the exception is the most junior.) Wolfe has had discussions with pop artists, including Prince and Rickie Lee Jones, about writing musicals. In what is essentially a marketing decision, he concluded that, since the Public's public was confused by five theatres, each theatre should be given a persona: the Martinson for new American work; the Newman for plays with broader commercial appeal; the Shiva for performance art and solo pieces; the Anspacher for intimate productions that emphasize the text; and the LuEsther for works in development. Whether the general audience will be enlightened remains to be seen, but one special audience—the board—was impressed by this evidence of Wolfe's "vision."

To run the Shakespeare Festival successfully, Wolfe has to come up with some creative business ideas, because the baseline financial numbers are so grim. The organization earns less than ten per cent of its $9.4-million budget from ticket sales. Even at the Newman, which is the largest theatre, a huge hit can sell only fifty thousand dollars' worth of tickets a week. If the production costs forty thousand dollars a week to run, it can continue without further losses but with no hope of recouping an investment that might be six hundred thousand dollars or more. From this economic soil the "hit mentality" flowered. By nurturing productions in-house and then propelling them onto Broadway, Papp found he could make money—lots of money. The royalties thrown off by the Broadway and road-company productions of "A Chorus Line" are still footing the Shakespeare Festival's deficits. No one expects another "Chorus Line," and even another "Pirates of Penzance" (which brought in about five million dollars) may be too much to hope for. However, *something* out of the ordinary is needed. At the Shakespeare Festival, business as usual is a recipe for decline and death. The organization requires an energetic, visionary producer to animate it, someone who can attract foundation and corporate grants, media attention, and exciting new plays. Akalaitis was not such a person. "I know I'm kind of a shy artist," she told me. "I consider myself hopelessly normal and not exciting. Public language is not something I warm to. I'm kind of a middle-aged downtown woman."

The notion that in Wolfe the board has found a modern equivalent of Papp was expressed to me most directly by Papp's widow, who is also a member of the board. Gail Merrifield Papp pointed out that a year or two before his death, when Joe was trying to decentralize the Public Theatre, he offered Wolfe autonomous control of one of the Public's stages. "Joe had a very strong instinctual feeling that George could head his own theatre with his own vision," she said. "George was the only person he'd ever had such discussions with." Wolfe, busy preparing "Jelly" for Broadway, declined. Later, Papp looked elsewhere for an heir. "The problem was that Joe's illness began to advance very rapidly," Gail Papp said. "He felt he needed to have someone in place almost immediately. As speculation, I would say that, had he been available, Joe would have picked George to succeed him. I just know that. I know how concerned he was that George have his own theatre as a producer-director. That was unprecedented."

She went on, "I was talking to somebody yesterday about George and I started saying 'Joe.' That never happens to me. In some way, although he's completely different from Joe, he reminds me of Joe. Joe talked fast, but George talks as fast, or even faster. He skitters over things that may be important, and Joe did that. Joe was *it*—he came from Brooklyn, he grew up poor in a certain kind of family. He was what he was. If he talked about color-blind casting, this didn't have to do with his expressing a commitment to something he subscribed to out of liberal ideology. He grew up in a mixed neighborhood. It was something he knew. Not to denigrate people who don't have that experience, but Joe felt that he was a member of that population, and so does George. You have a constellation of experiences that have a firsthand impact on you. When I tripped over my own tongue, that was what I was thinking. In a different way, George is *it*." ♦



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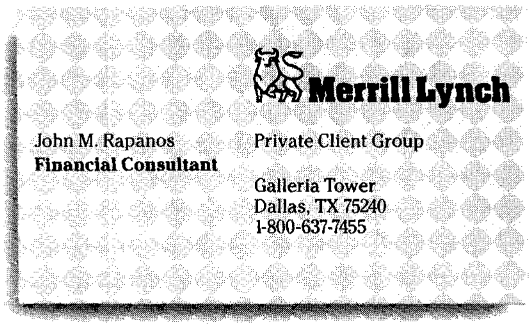

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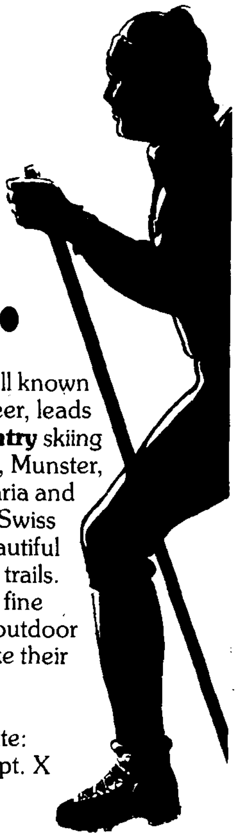

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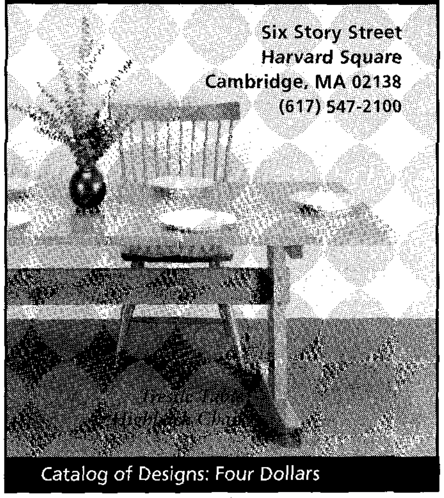

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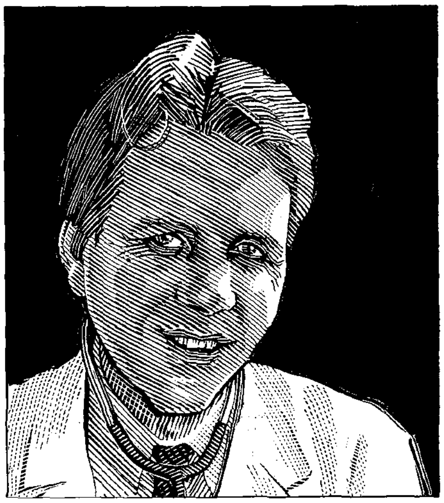
ANNALS OF MEDICINE

# MARSHALL'S HUNCH

*The unprecedented and very unorthodox findings of an unknown doctor point toward cures for stomach diseases that afflict millions.*

BY TERENCE MONMANEY

SO few people believed Dr. Barry J. Marshall when he said that peptic ulcers were an infectious disease caused by bacteria that hid out in the stomach that he decided to make his point in the most vivid way possible. One July day in 1984, he awoke early, skipped breakfast, drove to the hospital—he was then a thirty-two-year-old resident in internal medicine at the Fremantle Hospital, in Perth, Western Australia—went to his lab, donned his white coat, and fixed himself a drink containing about a billion of the suspect bacteria. "Ulcer bugs," he called them.



*When Dr. Marshall unveiled his theory about ulcers, he might as well have claimed to know the secret of cold fusion.*

ELLIOTT BANFIELD

As Marshall stood by a high lab bench thoughtfully swirling his turbid bacteria cocktail, a guy who worked in the lab said to him, "You're crazy."

Marshall said, "Here goes," and downed it. He cringed. "Tastes like swamp water," he observed.

In a way, Marshall's self-inoculation experiment appeared to be a gamble that he couldn't happily win. If he stayed well, he would have proved himself wrong; if his hunch was right, he would become sick, perhaps hideously so. Flouting the established procedure, he hadn't consulted the hospital's ethics board, because he figured that it would disallow the experiment as too dangerous. Nor had he told his wife about it: he didn't want to worry her. He was taking this step, he wrote later, out of "desperation."

The peptic ulcer, a sometimes deadly and always ghastly crater where the small intestine joins the stomach, hardly seemed to be the glamorous unsolved problem that a young physician would eagerly stake his career on, never mind his health. True, peptic ulcers were quite common, afflicting nearly one out of ten adults. But drugs such as Zantac and Tagamet greatly eased the disorder by stanching the stomach acid that aggravates the wound. So many people took those ulcer medicines, and for such extended periods, that they were the world's biggest-selling prescription drugs, with annual sales in the billions of dollars. And that profit bonanza was supposed to keep growing, as the baby boomers headed into their years of high anxiety. But before Marshall started his self-experiment, he'd established that antibiotics were capable of killing the bug in a test tube, and if he was right about its role in ulcers, antibiotics might be able to cure people of the affliction outright. In a decade or two, he thought, there might be no more ulcers to treat. So his little project actually had astronomical potential. The moment he swallowed the bugs, this unknown physician on the edge of the outback threatened to deprive some of the largest corporations in the world of billions of dollars.

At the same time, Marshall's theory challenged widely held and seemingly unassailable notions about the cause of ulcers. No physical ailment has ever been more closely tied to psychological turbulence. "The critical factor in the development of ulcers is the frustration associated with the wish to receive love," one social scientist reported in 1983. She went on, "When this wish is rejected, it is converted into a wish to be fed," which ultimately leads, she said, "to an ulcer." In "The Search for the Real Self," a 1988 book on "the personality disorders of our age," Dr. James F. Masterson states that the peptic ulcer is a "psychosomatic disorder" that typically afflicts people who are "hungering for emotional supplies that were lost in childhood or that were never sufficient to nourish the real self." In the lay manual "Understand Your Ulcer," a highly regarded gastroenterologist declared, "It is a disease of tense, nervous persons who live a strenuous and worrisome life." The book's jacket copy struck a world-weary chord, and described the ulcer as "a disease of civilization, closely linked with the tense tempo of modern life and the hurry of everyday existence."

The idea of American life itself as an ulcer-causing agent runs through the medical literature. The influential 1968 edition of "Stress and Disease" states, "There may even be, at some given time in history or in a particular cultural group, a prevailing type of reaction involving illness, as for example, peptic ulceration." The author, a famed psychiatrist named Harold G. Wolff, suggests that ulcers arise primarily because contemporary society, with its "competitive striving," triggers in some people a reaction (excessive secretion of gastric juice) that is a throwback to "the jungle period of Man's evolutionary development," when "the appropriate thing to do with an opponent or adversary was to kill and eat him." According to this scenario—which seems to draw equally on Darwin, Marx, and Edgar Rice Burroughs—capitalist society poses all the savage threats of primitive life and yet provides none of the satisfactions. Primed for a bloody clash that never comes, we devour our insides instead.

To Marshall, though, the peptic ulcer was not a darkly self-inflicted wound or a symptom of one's failure to cope with stress or a curse of modernity; seldom does microbiology contribute to philosophy, but if there should be such a thing as an ulcer bug an awful lot of gloomy talk about modern life must therefore be nonsense. Marshall first presented his theory outside Australia in 1983, at a gathering of infectious-disease specialists in Brussels. The audience was full of heavyweights, and before them stood this young nobody, tall, thin, loose-limbed. He had moppish brown hair, a smirkish smile, that broad Aussie humor. Except for dark rings around his eyes, everything about him was boyish. He smoked a cigarette now and then—a medical heretic to the core. Marshall had been coached to play down his ideas, to discuss his findings with the proper scientific restraint, but he could not hold back. "I was euphoric," he recalls. His happy-go-luckiness, combined with his inexperience (still a physician-in-training! not even in infectious diseases!), did not that day inspire total confidence in his authority.

Marshall told the group that it was his close colleague Dr. J. Robin Warren, a pathologist at the Royal Perth Hospital, who had discovered the bacteria, in 1979, while poring over biopsies of stomach tissue taken from patients with a variety of digestive complaints. And Marshall talked about how he had then pursued Warren's weird observations and how over several months he had found the bacteria in the stomach of almost every patient he saw with stomach inflammation, most patients with chronic severe indigestion, and almost every patient with peptic ulcer (provided that the patient wasn't also regularly consuming large doses of aspirin, which can cause peptic ulcers). The way it looked to Marshall, people infected by the bug first developed stomach inflammation, and then some fraction of those went on to develop chronic indigestion or peptic ulcer. (Later, he even began to think that the bug might cause stomach cancer.) And, as far as he could tell, the bug itself wasn't some new pathogen that had sprung out of the rain forest and into the belly of humanity; he thought that his older patients had probably been infected for decades.

When Marshall finished speaking, an audience member stood up and gently inquired, "Dr. Marshall, what causes peptic ulcers in people who don't have the bacteria?"

"If you don't have the bacteria, you don't have a peptic ulcer," Marshall said. He might as well have said he knew the secret of cold fusion. The scientists chuckled and murmured and shook their heads, a little embarrassed for a junior colleague whose début was such a disaster. Dr. Martin Blaser, the director of the Division of Infectious Diseases at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, was in the audience. Marshall's talk struck him then as "the most preposterous thing I'd ever heard," he says. "I thought, This guy is a madman."

Because of Marshall's remarks in Brussels, and later in print, he quickly gained a dubious notoriety. It was one

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thing to declare that bacteria caused peptic ulcers—nothing like that had ever been proposed before. But bacteria *living* in the stomach? For months or years? Where's this guy from, again—Perth? Can you even get *The New England Journal of Medicine* there? The human stomach is an antiseptic bath designed precisely for killing microbes, like those in food. Gastric juice, a mixture of digestive enzymes and hydrochloric acid, is highly caustic. It can dissolve iron nails. About the only living tissue that could survive prolonged exposure to stomach acid, the thinking went, was the stomach. Considering the masses of bacteria, fungi, yeast, mold, and viruses that plunged almost constantly into the stomach, it was free of live microbes to such a remarkable degree that experts said it was sterile.

But far from simply dismissing Marshall's ideas, dozens of scientists more or less independently paid him the highest tribute their profession could bestow: they set out to prove him wrong. Dr. David Y. Graham, a distinguished gastroenterology researcher at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Houston, recalls of his first impression of Marshall's work, "Here's some crazy guy saying crazy things. It seemed that he was going to set the field back years. But the virtue of his idea was that it was testable—it wouldn't be hard to find out if it was true."

As Marshall's critics hastened to point out, maybe the bacteria he had seen in his patients' stomachs were just some contaminant that had stuck to the biopsy specimens. Or maybe the bacteria did live in the stomach but weren't pathogenic—mere colonizers that caused no damage, like a lot of oral bacteria and skin bacteria. Or maybe the stomach bacteria he had found were opportunists—moved in *after* the ulcer had weakened local defenses.

Marshall had hoped to answer those objections by transmitting the infection to experimental animals and following its course. He and his assistants had managed to culture the bacteria, and in his first animal test he injected the bacteria into the abdomens of two rats. Nothing happened. Next, he fed the bacteria to baby pigs. Again, nothing. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the stuff that rats and pigs eat and the muck they wallow in, the animals easily resisted the stomach bug. "I felt as though I'd failed miserably," Marshall recalls of his negative results, adding, "I was going nowhere fast." It was then that he decided that his next experimental animal would be Barry Marshall.

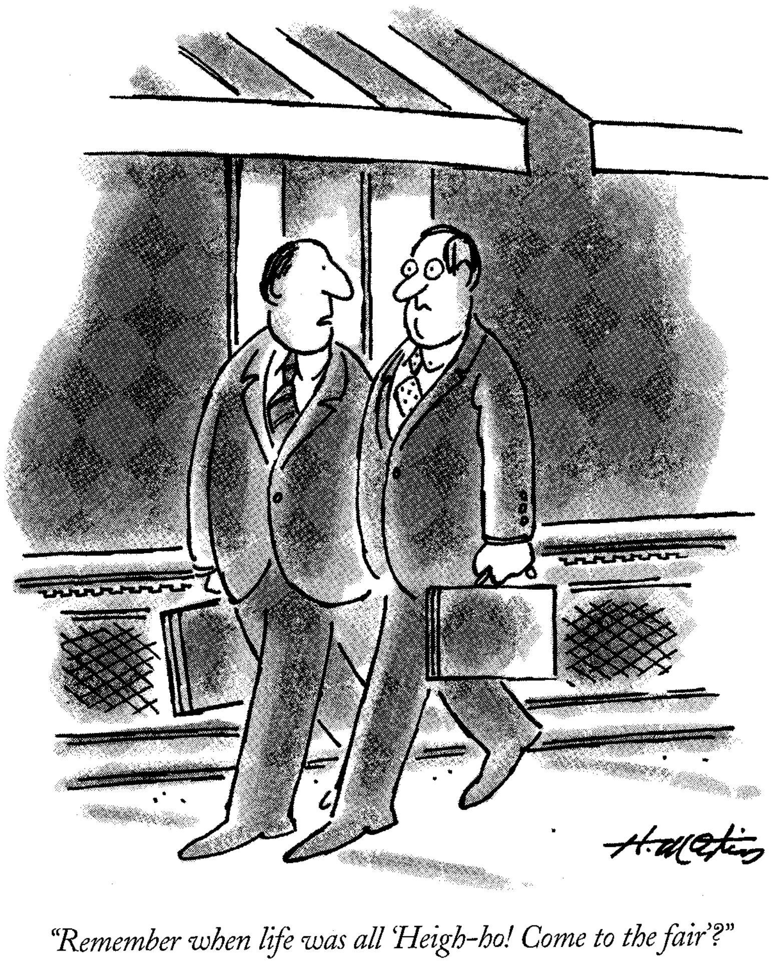
A few hours after he swallowed the bacteria, his stomach started growling, and it growled the rest of the day. Aside from that, he was fine for a week. On the eighth day, he awoke at dawn, felt nauseated, and vomited. "If I'd had any brains, I would have caught some of it and analyzed it," he says of the vomitus. "But I was half asleep at the time. I did notice it tasted funny—no acid—and I remember thinking that that was strange." That afternoon, he measured his body temperature: normal. Over the next week, he had several headaches but ran no fever. Hunger stalked him. His mother, who was a nurse, mentioned to him that his breath smelled foul. Later, a few co-workers told him the same thing. He grew tired, irritable, hoarse. He looked pale and drawn.

In the middle of the experiment's second week, Marshall underwent endoscopy and biopsy: a tube with both a tiny video camera and pincers at the lower end was snaked down his gullet; the camera sent pictures to a TV monitor, and the pincers clipped a bit of stomach tissue for analysis. This was a second session: the first session, conducted a few weeks before, had revealed him to be in the pink of health. But now the physician who performed the biopsy noted that Marshall's stomach lining was inflamed, slimy, as punky as an old mushroom. Microscopic analysis of the biopsied material revealed a festering infection—swarms of bacilli seeming to hover around inflamed stomach cells. A third biopsy, performed four days later, revealed no infection: gone. Marshall's immune system had evidently managed to fight off the invasion, and he felt fine.

Describing the ordeal in the April 15, 1985, issue of *The Medical Journal of Australia*, Marshall and his co-workers pointed out that this bug was no benign colonizer. And yet Marshall was struck by what an oddly gentle siege he had undergone. He hadn't missed an hour of work. Anyone whose stomach happened to be experiencing an invasion of the bacteria might easily mistake the symptoms for exhaustion or indigestion. Or stress. "We were quite happy just to show that the germ was involved in disease," Marshall says. "It didn't seem necessary for me to go all the way and get an ulcer to make that point. An ulcer—you know, it's quite unpleasant."

◆

In 1986, Marshall and his family moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, and he is now an associate professor of gastroenterology at the University of Virginia School of Medicine there. His office is in an old brick building that was once a cancer ward. Sprayed across the ceiling



*"Remember when life was all 'Heigh-ho! Come to the fair'?"*

above his desk are brownish-maroon spots. "Blood," he said. "Probably a punctured aorta."

A decade after the tomatoes flew in Brussels, Marshall continues to talk about the medical dogmas he has been up against—and it seems that he's still fighting a few—but the fact is that he has tenure, and two answering machines can hardly handle all his calls. He possesses an unusual combination of iconoclasm and eminence. He's a towering rebel. Martin Blaser, of Vanderbilt, whose first impression of Marshall was so unfavorable, now has fifteen colleagues in his lab working on the ulcer bug. "He certainly didn't have the bearing or the demeanor of the scientist," Blaser says of Marshall as he appeared in the Brussels gathering. "But, to Barry's credit, he had the vision. In science, you need the vision—and, of course, the precision."

In 1989, after several years of nomenclatural debate, the bacterium that Warren and Marshall discovered was finally named *Helicobacter pylori*, because the rod-shaped bacillus is twisted into a helix and because it generally inhabits the pylorus, the gateway to the duodenum of the small intestine. Few experts now doubt that the bacterium causes a great deal of human misery. Armies of medical scientists have published more than fifteen hundred papers on *Helicobacter*—a torrent of research that has turned up astonishing things. For Marshall, the trumpets of vindication sounded last February, when a definitive clinical trial performed by Austrian scientists finally backed up his prediction. "STUDY CONFIRMS MOST ULCERS ARE CAUSED BY A BACTERIUM, CURABLE BY ANTIBIOTICS," *The Wall Street Journal* announced at the time. Meanwhile, field epidemiologists have been jumping into jeeps and airplanes and running off to test people all over the world for *Helicobacter* infection. They've found it everywhere. To quote a paper in *The Lancet* last fall, "*Helicobacter pylori* is arguably the commonest chronic bacterial infection in man." And, perhaps the most striking development yet, chronic *Helicobacter* infection is now recognized as a major cause of stomach cancer—the world's second most common malignancy.

David Graham, whose first impression of Marshall had been of "some crazy guy," and Mae F. Go, Graham's co-worker in Houston, wrote in the July issue of *Gastroenterology*, "It would have

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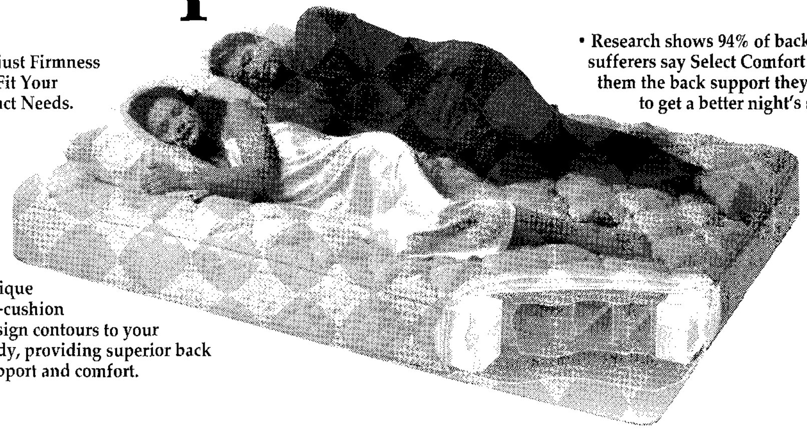

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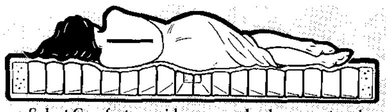

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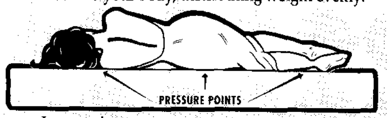

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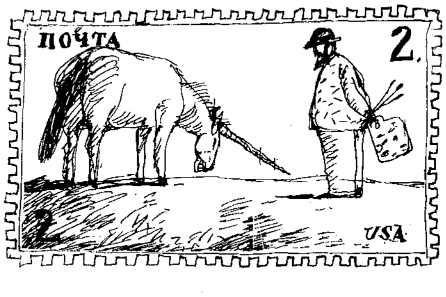
been unimaginable that such seemingly diverse diseases as gastritis, gastric ulcer, duodenal ulcer, and the intestinal form of gastric carcinoma would all be different manifestations of an infection with a bacterium. The unimaginable has happened." Unprecedented though they may be, the findings have an old-fashioned ring. In this era of the elusive untamable virus, here's a big fat squirming bacterium. And though important work on *Helicobacter* is being done by gene splicers, a lot of crucial stuff can be learned with a microscope. Pasteur could lend a hand. In recent years, historians and sociologists have emphasized that science progresses not by bold leaps of truth—an aggrandizing myth, they say—but by slight adjustments to the accepted framework of ideas. But the discovery of *Helicobacter* is no crummy little paradigm shift. It's a mindblower—tangible, reproducible, unexpected, and, yes, revolutionary. Just the fact that a bug causes peptic ulcers, long considered the cardinal example of a psychosomatic illness, is a spear in the breast of New Age medicine, which invokes the mind-body link as the key to health. What a burden! Happily, *Helicobacter* says it's not our fault.

Julie Parsonnet, a medical epidemiologist at the Stanford University School of Medicine, is a principal author of a key study establishing *Helicobacter's* role in stomach cancer. Originally, she had set out to prove that Marshall was wrong about *Helicobacter*—that it was in fact a harmless stomach colonizer. "It took several years for me to learn that *I* was wrong," she says. Reflecting on Marshall's role as a prime mover, she says, "All science is going to happen. Somebody was going to find the bacterium sooner or later. But the fact is he did find it. And he wrote it up and he pushed it."

ACTUALLY, Warren and Marshall were not the first to observe *Helicobacter* in the human stomach. Since the turn of the century, other medical workers (as Marshall learned when he delved into the literature) had glimpsed the bug, had even published microscopic pictures of stomach tissue in which these bacteria were in evidence, but they neglected to pursue it or identify it. Then, in the fifties, a supposedly definitive study of human gastrointestinal flora concluded that the stomach was microbe-free, and thus it came to be viewed as a "sterile" organ. No longer did many pathologists even bother to check the stomach for resident bacteria, and, more significant, those who found the microbe doubted their own eyes. They did not see it because they did not believe in it.

Meanwhile, during the seventies, gastroenterologists perfected the endoscope, which allowed them to gaze directly upon living digestive tissue, making it much easier to perform meaningful biopsies and also to diagnose gastritis and peptic ulcer more accurately. And microbiologists developed new techniques for identifying and culturing fastidious bacteria like *Helicobacter*, which requires a trace of oxygen but drowns in air. When Warren was reached in Perth by phone and asked how he managed to discover *Helicobacter*, he said, "It was something that came out of the blue. I happened to be there at the right time, because of the improvements in gastroenterology in the seventies." Warren's voice was soft, and classical music was coming from a radio on his desk. He went on, "Mind you, I never saw any patients. All I got were little bits of stomach tissue in a bottle. Anyone who said there were bacteria in the stomach was thought to be slightly crackers. By the time Barry Marshall turned up, I think my colleagues in the department believed me. But I needed a clinician to help me—to see how my findings were related to symptoms, whether or not getting rid of the bacteria got rid of the symptoms."

After Marshall had begun to establish links between *Helicobacter* and gastritis, he was able to see certain other nagging mysteries in a new light. One concerned the ulcer medicine DeNol, which had been marketed for years in Europe. DeNol contains the heavy metal bismuth—a low-tech, old-fashioned therapeutic. Bismuth subsalicylate is the active ingredient in Pepto-Bismol. A couple of small studies had shown that DeNol prevented the recurrence of peptic ulcers better than any of the newer high-tech acid-blocking drugs did. And yet no researcher, not even DeNol's manufacturer, knew why. The entry on bismuth preparations in a standard modern pharmacology text says, "The mechanism of its action is unknown."



Marshall had an idea, though, because heavy-metal compounds had been used to fight infectious microbes in the days before the discovery of highly specific antibiotics like penicillin. Pepto-Bismol was originally marketed as a therapy for cholera infantum, a type of bacterial diarrhea that struck babies. From 1984 to 1988, Marshall and his colleagues treated hundreds of ulcer patients with combinations of antibiotics and DeNol. He was running an "underground clinic," he says, giving patients antibiotics even as his supervisor, a gastroenterologist of the old school, was prescribing for them acid-blocking drugs, Valium, peace and quiet, and psychotherapy. In 1988, Marshall and eight co-workers in Perth threw down the gauntlet, announcing in *The Lancet* that their combined bismuth-and-antibiotic therapy healed ulcers far better than one of the most commonly prescribed acid-blockers.

So far, researchers at various medical centers have performed a dozen studies showing that antibiotics, administered alone or with a bismuth-containing agent, can cure ulcers and generally prevent their recurrence by wiping out *Helicobacter* infection. In February of this year, the Austrian researchers reported their dramatic findings, in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. The researchers treated fifty-two ulcer patients with two antibiotics (metronidazole and amoxicillin) and the acid-blocker ranitidine, or Zantac, and another fifty-two patients with placebos and ranitidine. The antibiotics wiped out the infection in forty-six patients, and of those only one had a recurrence of ulcers (most likely because of heavy aspirin intake). Of those who received the acid-blocker but not antibiotics, forty-two had an ulcer relapse. "Our results support the concept of a cause-and-effect relation between *H. pylori* infection and recurrent duodenal ulcer," the Austrians dryly noted. They went on, "We now offer this combination of antibiotics and ranitidine to patients with *H. pylori*-associated chronic duodenal ulcer disease, as an alternative to long-term drug-maintenance therapy or elective surgery."

From now on, it appears, acid-blockers

will be used as an adjunct to antibiotics in ulcer therapy. This promises unsurpassed relief to millions of people—and considerable savings. A standard maintenance regimen of Zantac—the world's No. 1 prescription drug, with an estimated three billion dollars in sales last year—runs about a hundred dollars a month. Over the years, a person with a recurring ulcer might easily spend ten or fifteen thousand dollars keeping it quiet. In contrast, a twelve-day ulcer-curing course of the antibiotics amoxicillin and metronidazole, which are generic drugs, would cost about twenty dollars. All told, Marshall estimates that an ulcer can be cured outright for six hundred and fifty dollars, including the costs of visits to a physician, antibody tests, endoscopy, and drugs.

The makers of the leading acid-blocking drugs were not initially among Marshall's biggest fans. Marshall says he tried right from the start to interest pharmaceutical firms in his findings. "I wrote a letter to all the major drug companies," he recalls. "I said, 'Look, I've got some major new advances related to ulcers, and I'd like to tell you about them and ask for some support.' They wrote back—practically a form letter—'Dear Dr. Marshall, we're very pleased to know you've got major new findings, but research funding is very tight this year, blah, blah, blah, congratulations, blah, blah, keep up the good work.' And that was about all I got." What a difference a decade makes. Now, pharmaceutical giants as well as university labs and small firms are scrambling to cash in on *Helicobacter*. Everything from new diagnostic tests to new antibiotics are in the works. Recently, Marshall says, he has helped to conduct clinical trials of new drugs, funded by Glaxo (maker of Zantac) and other major drug companies.

Graham, whose research team has done important studies on antibiotic treatment of ulcers, recently told me, "Over time, within perhaps even my lifetime, we should be able to eliminate ulcer disease from the human race."

IT takes a kind of cunning for *Helicobacter pylori* to fill its niche, for the adult human stomach is one of nature's most hostile habitats. Each day, the stomach normally produces about half a gallon of gastric juice, whose strong hydrochloric acid and digestive enzymes readily tear meat and microbes apart. Gastric juice is like a binary chemical weapon—so destructive that it's constituted only on the way to the target. As cells in the stomach lining secrete the raw ingredients of gastric juice into the mucus that coats the stomach lining, the ingredients mix into an even more caustic brew, which then oozes into the cavity. There the gastric juice breaks pabulum down chemically while muscles in the stomach wall act to crush it. The viscoelastic mucus, as thick as axle grease, keeps the stomach from digesting itself.

Once *Helicobacter* reaches the stomach, it probably does not linger out in the open cavity—a tossing sea of toxic chemicals. It heads for cover. The bacterium's helical shape seems to have been designed for speedy travel in a dense medium. *Helicobacter* is living torque; a microscopic Roto-Rooter, it corkscrews through the mucus. Then, instead of penetrating the cells of the stomach lining, it settles in the mucus just beyond the lining. More often than not, it settles in the pylorus. No one knows why. Under the microscope, a *Helicobacter* infection looks like a satellite image of an armada gathered off a ragged shore. At one end of the bacterium is a cluster of long, wispy, curving flagella, which may serve as anchors. It's a graceful menace.

*Helicobacter* possesses a vital defense against stomach acid, and this adaptation, too, is a marvel of evolutionary design. Its coat is studded with enzymes that convert urea—a waste product, virtually unlimited supplies of which can be found in the stomach—directly into carbon dioxide and also into ammonia, a strong alkali. Thus *Helicobacter* ensconces itself in an acid-neutralizing mist. In like fashion, it generates another antacid—bicarbonate, as in Alka-Seltzer.

A *Helicobacter* infection that establishes itself succeeds largely because the immune system can't reach it. In response to a *Helicobacter* invasion, immune-system cells in the bone marrow produce white blood cells, killer cells, and other microbe destroyers, and those float through the bloodstream to the very edge of the stomach lining—and go no farther, because the lining holds them back. The *Helicobacter*, hovering in the mucus, are out of range. And yet the immune system sends reinforcements. Killer cells pile up, gorging the stomach lining; permanently alerted, seldom engaged, the killers become trigger-happy. Some die, fall apart, and spill their microbe-fighting com-

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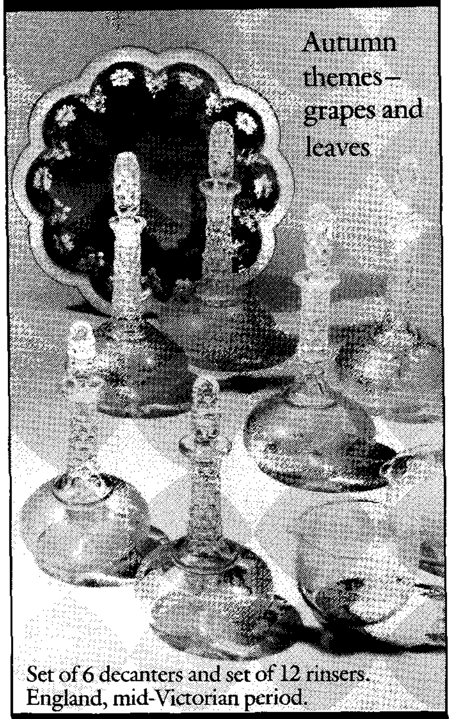

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pounds into the host tissue. Friendly fire begets friendly fire. Metabolic hell breaks loose. The lining is now inflamed: acute gastritis. Micronutrients are pumped from the bloodstream to the front lines, to feed the killers, but loads of them seep out of the stomach lining and into the mucus. Offshore, the *Helicobacter* feast; having drawn the immune system into battle, the bacteria now loot the provisions. "I propose that inflammation is good for *Helicobacter*," Blaser says. "That's what it wants."

Chronic gastritis, a standoff between the bacteria and the host's immune system, may persist for years—decades, according to some estimates. As it happens, whatever serious damage is done to stomach or intestinal tissue is apparently done not by the bacteria themselves but by the inflammatory response they provoke. That the host plays such a large role in his own pathology may help explain why *Helicobacter* infection affects different people differently. (Also, scientists recently discovered that there are at least two strains of *Helicobacter pylori*, and that one of them is far more likely to cause a peptic ulcer than any other.) Inevitably, though, for *Helicobacter* to be really successful it has to meet a parasite's final challenge: to start another colony before the host dies.

The means by which *Helicobacter* usually travels from person to person remain something of a mystery. There are sound ideas about how the infection spreads, but very little hard data nailing down the routes. The bacterium's exotic requirements for food and shelter, in addition to its susceptibility to oxygen, imply that it does not survive long outside the human body. After numerous pathological studies, it has still not been shown to infect the blood or any tissues besides the gastrointestinal tract; and so researchers believe that blood does not carry or transmit the bacterium. Nor is there any evidence that the bacterium is sexually transmitted or acquired.

At the moment, the best clinical and epidemiological evidence is that human beings acquire *Helicobacter* orally. A study published last November showed, for the first time, that *Helicobacter* can be found in fecal matter. As a result of that finding, many researchers believe that a large number, if not a majority, of *Helicobacter* infections are acquired by the ingestion of waste-tainted water or food, or by oral contact with waste-tainted skin. But that is probably not the only transmission route. The mouth, besides serving as the entrance for the bacteria, appears to be an exit as well. Microbiologists have found live bacteria in the dental plaque of some persons with *Helicobacter* stomach infections; presumably, the bacteria do not colonize the mouth but only pass through. A common symptom of active gastritis and peptic ulcer is belching, and it is likely that such an eruption (not to mention vomiting) blasts *Helicobacter* into the mouth. Given that, one can conceive of scenarios. For instance, a man with an ulcer retires for the night, but his sleep is troubled by gastroesophageal reflux—heartburn. The backwash carries *Helicobacter*. Upon awakening, he kisses his wife good morning. She washes the *Helicobacter* down with coffee. The exchange of microbes gives new meaning to the old notion that people can give each other ulcers.

WITHIN a few years after Marshall first proclaimed that *Helicobacter* caused human disease, and in spite of what a 1991 scholarly review called the "nearly universal initial skepticism" that greeted his idea, researchers had developed new screening tests for the infection. One commonly used test looks for serum antibodies. (Even though the immune system may not engage the bacteria directly, it can generate antibodies from bacterial corpses and sloughed-off parts.) Seizing on the antibody test, medical researchers rather quickly charted the broad scope of *Helicobacter* infection.

In rural Gambia, British researchers found that ninety per cent of the children they tested had been infected by the age of five. In the Ivory Coast, researchers found the infection in most of the three-to-six-year-olds they tested. In some parts of Africa, researchers have observed, the infection "is almost universal among adults." In Bangkok, a *Helicobacter*-antibody survey of poor children in a local orphanage found that seventy-four per cent of them had become infected by age four. In China and Vietnam, in Papua New Guinea, in Colombia and Peru, in Algeria, in Burkina Faso, in every Third World country tested so far, researchers have documented startlingly high rates of infection. And more often than not the infection appears to have been acquired in childhood.

Because researchers don't know exactly how *Helicobacter* is transmitted, they're at a loss to explain why the Third World populations tested seem all but saturated with the infection. Generally, though, high rates of gastrointestinal infections are associated with a low standard of living, partly because of poor or nonexistent sanitation. But a lack of plumbing may not be the entire answer. In Burkina Faso, for instance, some women premasticate food for their babies, and it is conceivable, as medical researchers working there have pointed out, that mothers are thus passing the bacteria to their children.

In the developed world, *Helicobacter* infection is somewhat less common, on the whole, and it is rare among the very young. An antibody survey in France found that less than one per cent of those under the age of six had the infection. In England, a broad survey found the infection in only ten per cent of those under twenty, but in fifty per cent of those over fifty. A similar pattern seems to hold in the United States. Graham, after analyzing numerous studies conducted in the United States, has derived a rough *Helicobacter* equation: age group equals scope of infection. Accordingly, about twenty per cent of people in their twenties are infected, thirty per cent of people in their thirties, and so on. The correlation between age and infection puzzles researchers. One possible explanation is that people in the industrialized nations simply tend to pick up the infection later in life than people elsewhere. But many researchers favor another model—that a greater percentage of older people are infected because *Helicobacter* got transmitted much more frequently in the past. This model assumes that changes in the standard of living—less crowding, smaller families, more effective sanitation—have gradually curbed the spread of *Helicobacter*. Also, the extensive use of antibiotics for other infectious diseases, especially in children, may have incidentally reduced *Helicobacter* infections.

Waning or not, the infection is common, even in the industrialized world. For a bacterium that was discovered only a decade ago, and the mere idea of which had been scorned as preposterous, to be globally endemic is amazing. In a 1991 monograph, Marshall says, "In my naiveté, I expected *H. pylori* to be immediately accepted as the cause of duodenal ulcer and gastritis, but I did not expect it to be the world's most common bacterial infection."

A REMARK that Marshall made in his first paper on *Helicobacter* could be compared to the wise-alecky "it has not escaped our notice" in James Watson and Francis Crick's landmark DNA paper of 1953. These as yet unidentified bacteria, Marshall wrote, "may have a part to play in other poorly understood, gastritis associated diseases," including, he said parenthetically, "gastric cancer." As he recalls it, he was basically connecting the dots. "Once I'd become convinced that the germ was involved in gastritis, I just looked up gastritis in a textbook and saw what *it* was associated with," he says. "And one of those things was stomach cancer."

*"She's not very good at defending herself, but she does very well at identifying her feelings."*

Naturally, the experts thought he was crazy. To be sure, they'd suspected that stomach cancer somehow slowly arose out of chronic gastritis. According to one authoritative evaluation, published in 1986, "the entire process leading from superficial gastritis to gastric carcinoma is thought to take from 16 to 24 years."

No, as the experts saw it, the problem with Marshall's cancer claim was the bacteria. A bacterium had never before been causally connected to such a common human cancer. Besides, the thinking went, stomach cancer was too complex and too important to be brought on by a picayune gut bacterium. Worldwide, stomach cancer was the second-leading malignancy, and it would have been the leader if not for cigarettes, because lung cancer was No. 1. In the Third World, stomach cancer was extremely common—downright epidemic in parts of Asia and Latin America. Oddly, though, stomach cancer had been steadily disappearing from the industrialized world. In the United States, stomach cancer had been the leading fatal cancer before 1940. Since then, it had not merely tapered off but plummeted, to No. 8. By the late seventies, stomach-cancer deaths stood at one-sixth their former peak. The change was a total mystery—"an unplanned triumph," public-health authorities said.

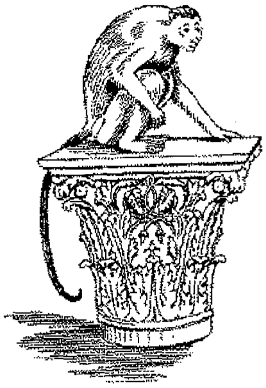
Marshall had checked a number of his stomach-cancer patients in Australia for the bug, and he had nearly always found it. That was encouraging—it didn't *dis*prove his idea—but it didn't prove it, either, because stomach cancer generally strikes older people, and most of them, it turned out later, have *Helicobacter* anyway. In any event, the main contribution he made to the unfolding cancer research was his self-inoculation experiment: by helping to prove that the bug caused gastritis, he forced even the naysayers to take the idea seriously.

By the late eighties, epidemiologists had pieced together the global distribution of *Helicobacter*, and they could see that it nearly matched that of stomach cancer: high rates in Third World nations, low rates in industrialized nations. As for the most dramatic feature of stomach-cancer epidemiology, the steep decline in places like the United States, that trend fitted in very nicely with the idea that industrialization curbed *Helicobacter* transmission.

Still, the population surveys fell short of establishing a cause-and-effect relationship; there was no telling which came first, the tumor or the bug. Finally, in the fall of 1991, two major studies on *Helicobacter* and stomach cancer added to the equation the crucial missing dimension—that of time. One study drew on several thousand Japanese-American men in Hawaii who had enrolled in a health program in the sixties. The other study (Parsonnet, of Stanford, was a co-author) drew on more than a hundred thousand California residents who had enrolled in a health-maintenance organization in the sixties. The key to both studies was that the enrollees had had blood taken in that decade, and the blood samples had been frozen.

The researchers first tracked down all cases of stomach cancer in both groups and then performed a *Helicobacter*-antibody test on the patients' previously donated blood. The tests showed that nearly all the patients had been previously infected with *Helicobacter*. Obviously, the infection had come before the malignancy. But what was most significant was that the infection was nearly half again as common among the stomach-cancer patients as among enrollees without cancer who were of the same sex and age and had a similar background. Tallying the odds, the researchers found that, over all, *Helicobacter* infection multiplied an individual's likelihood of developing stomach cancer from three to six times. And for some people the danger was even greater. Among blacks in the California group, the infection increased the stomach-cancer risk nine times; among women, the risk rose to eighteen. By comparison, smoking cigarettes for years is thought to increase one's risk of developing lung cancer twenty times. Clearly, long-term *Helicobacter* infection can act as a potent carcinogen.

Significantly, the Hawaii and California studies arrived at the same estimate for the amount of stomach cancer caused by the bacteria: sixty per cent. Worldwide, then, *Helicobacter* may be responsible for something like half a million cancer deaths a year. The vast extent of the toll is forcing experts to rethink cancer causality and also to recalculate basic cancer risks—especially those risks attributed to diet. For years, public-health agencies have promoted the idea that a large proportion of human cancer—about a third—was triggered by what we ate or didn't eat. And stomach cancer was considered among the most important of all diet-related cancers. It has been linked to excessive intake of preservatives such as salt, pickling brine, and nitrites (remember the nitrite scare?), and to low intake of fresh fruits and vegetables. Of course, what we eat still may be involved in stomach cancer; not all stomach-cancer victims carry *Helicobacter*, and most people with the bug don't get cancer, so it could well be that some other factor works in concert with the bug. But the starring etiological role once enjoyed by dietary factors has been shrunk to a supporting role, if not a bit part. Suddenly, our diet looks much less carcinogenic. Marshall says, "Americans tend to worry about environmental or dietary chemicals causing cancer, but those do not seem so important now, because of *H. pylori*."



The exact process by which *Helicobacter*-induced gastritis can lead to malignancy rather than peptic ulceration is a matter of speculation. Blaser, who was a co-author of the Hawaii study, believes that the decisive factor may be age at the time of infection. Cancer may be the expression of a *Helicobacter* infection acquired early in life, he says, whereas an ulcer may reflect a somewhat later acquisition or infection with an especially ulcerogenic *Helicobacter* strain. Roughly, the odds that, say, a twenty-year-old infected with *Helicobacter* will develop a peptic ulcer in his lifetime are fifty-fifty, Marshall says; that he'll develop stomach cancer, one in a hundred. "The key thing about *H. pylori* infection is that it doesn't come and go," Blaser says. "It persists in most people probably for life. It can do its damage acutely or chronically, or maybe both. It's remarkable to have one organism that we're attributing to at least two diseases."

It has not escaped anyone's notice that the working out of *Helicobacter's* role in stomach cancer immediately suggests a means of preventing many cases of the disease. For some time, Marshall has been running a sort of modest cancer-prevention program. It hinges on the evidence that primary relatives of people with gastric cancer have an elevated risk of developing the disease. Until recently, that clustering was usually attributed to genetic factors; now researchers figure that it reflects familial transmission of *Helicobacter*. Whenever a person with stomach cancer walks into Marshall's Virginia clinic, he insists on testing the person's spouse, children, and siblings for *Helicobacter*. If any of them test positive, he recommends antibiotic therapy for them to eradicate the infection, cure any underlying gastritis, and thus, he hopes, reduce the likelihood that they will develop stomach cancer. Perhaps this triumph will be planned.

THESE days, Marshall is studying another noisome, wickedly common gastrointestinal ailment—non-ulcer dyspepsia, or indigestion. It is not the sexiest problem going, but it afflicts tens of millions of Americans, and it is responsible for a large portion of the billion dollars spent each year on over-the-counter antacids and other digestive aids. Marshall thinks that the root cause of many cases is *Helicobacter pylori* infection.

His colleagues are not surprised to find him making that point, and the skeptics are no less skeptical this time around. Dr. Loren Laine, writing in *Gastroenterology* last year, said, "Multiple studies have failed to document that symptoms of nonulcer dyspepsia correlate with the presence of *H. pylori* and treatment studies have not convincingly documented that eradication leads to resolution of symptoms."

"I'm having a lot of trouble showing that that disorder is related to *H. pylori*," Marshall says. "But I don't get too upset anymore. I think it's just that the right clinical trials haven't been done yet." What makes dyspepsia so difficult to study is its subjectivity: the symptoms are the varied, fleeting discomforts common to many gut problems. For some reason, chronic recurring dyspepsia is more common among women than among men.

To study the problem, Marshall has struck upon a deeply innovative medical technique: he listens to his patients and takes what they say seriously. Every day, at whatever time they wish, a number of his dyspeptic patients get a phone call from Marshall's computer. His recorded voice asks how they feel, asks about their symptoms that day, what medications they've been taking, any side effects—an automated medical diary. He is treating them with antibiotics, to rid them of *Helicobacter*, and he wants to find out if their symptoms vanish as the bugs do. That, he says, is the only way of linking infection and indigestion. The recording reminds the patients of Dr. Marshall's number, in the event that any of them want to speak with him personally. "Thank you," the recording says. Showing off the computers that keep in touch with his patients, he said, "I'm something of a hacker." He added, "We have another recording, done by a nice American woman, for people who don't speak Australian."

"A lot of the experts up in their ivory towers believe that non-ulcer dyspepsia is a psychiatric or functional disorder," Marshall explained. "What I see often is a forty- or fifty-year-old woman with a twenty-year history of vague digestive symptoms—pain, discomfort, never gets worse, never gets better. Usually, she's been to a lot of doctors—men—and they can't find anything wrong, so they say she's neurotic. Usually, she's had her gallbladder removed—which made no difference, probably only made things worse. And the thing is, by now the women themselves are convinced they're basket cases, because they've been told that so often. I don't think these women are crazy. But it has been very difficult convincing my colleagues of that." ♦

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A Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club

RANDOM HOUSE

### LETTER FROM LONDON

# THE DEFICIT MILLIONAIRES

*Acts of God and other disasters have brought Lloyd's of London to the brink of collapse, and who is paying the price? An entire sector of England's upper-middle class, which now faces financial ruin and is beginning to suspect that the once-coveted social rite of becoming a Lloyd's Name is a fool's dupe.*

BY JULIAN BARNES

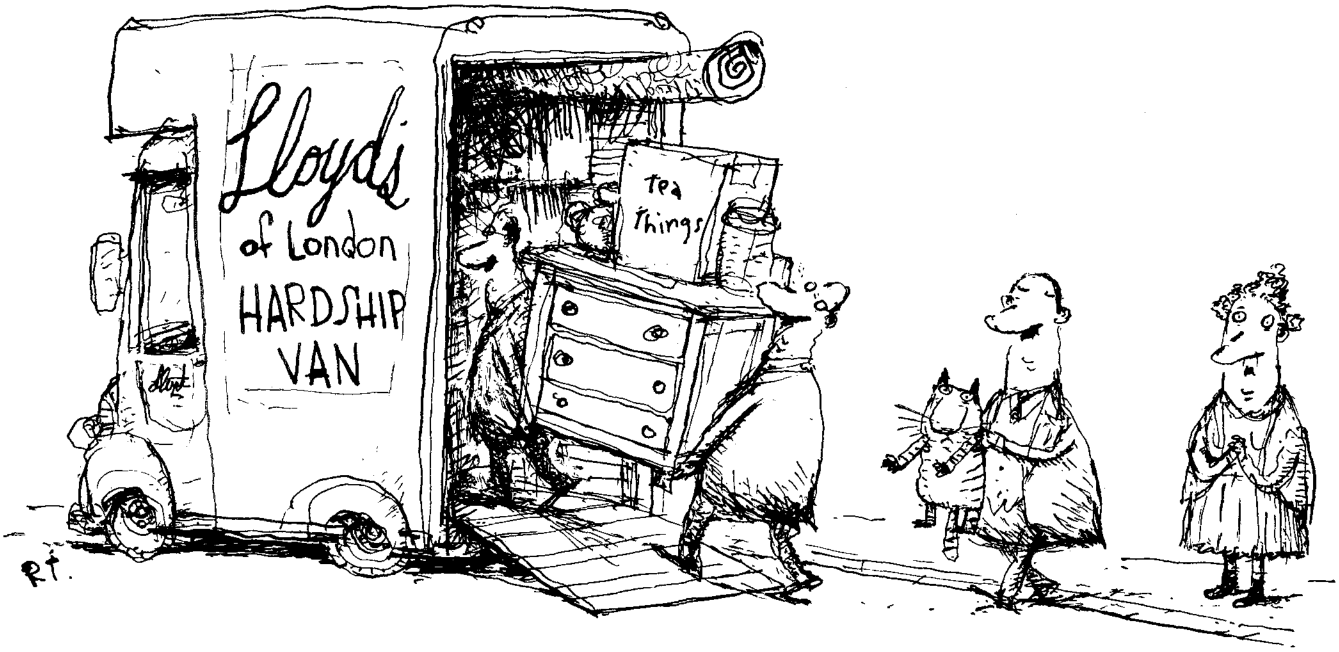
YOU don't often meet someone who has lost a million pounds. Even more rarely, someone who will mention the fact to a stranger—worse, a journalist—over the telephone. But this was almost the first thing Fernanda Herford said to me when I called her. "I hit a million this morning. They asked for another three hundred and nineteen thousand pounds. They are absolutely ruthless. Well, of course, they won't get it." This was all spoken in an even, slightly ironical tone of voice. The "they" of her complaint—East End mafia? Specialty-drug doctors?—turn out to be the Lloyd's of London insurance market. Fernanda Herford is a Lloyd's investor, or Name, who, despite the belief that her money was working at the low-risk end of the market, has been faced over three successive years with grotesque, parodic losses. The fact that she is so open about such losses—here in Britain, where caginess, not to say lavatorial secrecy, generally clings to money—is an indicator that for a small slice of society something has gone terribly, unprecedentedly wrong. One of the pillars of British society has turned out to be made of Styrofoam. Speaking out is a direct indicator of incredulity, betrayal, and rage.

A few days later, I met Mrs. Herford at her Chelsea house, just off the Fulham Road. We sat in a sunlit back yard with a brimming Cafetière between us; her husband, an accountant, was working upstairs; in the kitchen, a student daughter was dragging a feed-the-village sack of Elephant chapati flour across the floor toward the stove. Amid this upper-middle-class English normality sat a woman in trim middle age who until two years ago was, by all outside criteria, somewhere between comfortably off and rich, who implicitly trusted what was held to be one of the world's great financial institutions, and who today is seriously insolvent. "Now they control every penny—and they will take it. They are *ruthless*," she repeats. And yet, compared with others, her case is not so bad: "I'm not a sob story in Lloyd's terms."

Asked to specify how and why she went into Lloyd's, back in 1977, she insists that "I didn't do it for the money." This may seem an odd reply at first, yet money, after all, comes both to those who are fascinated by its working and to those who are not. She also didn't do it "to educate the children," that traditional explanation of the Lloyd's investor, who does not, of course, send his or her children to state schools. She did it "because my father was already a Name—I sort of slid into it." You "slide" into such things because of the assumptions of your social circle. Fernanda Herford had a brother and two sisters-in-law who were in Lloyd's; she also knew a Lloyd's agent named Anthony Gooda. "I did it because I knew the Gooda setup, because women were allowed into Lloyd's, and I thought it was a very English thing to do." Her first foray into the market—underwriting business up to a hundred and fifty thousand pounds—came the following year. Given the normal haggling time it takes to settle most insurance claims, the accounting period at Lloyd's is three years. So in 1981 Mrs. Herford received a check for four thousand one hundred pounds, representing a 2.73-per-cent return for the year 1978. That may sound rather unimpressive, but the point—one of the main points for those privileged enough to have been Lloyd's Names over the three centuries of its existence—is that the money invested is not actually handed over. The principle of the market is that a Name "shows" a certain amount of wealth, so that Lloyd's knows that if things go wrong—if, classically, the ship fails to reach port—it will have that wealth to call upon. The investor is free, while awaiting this postulated call, to invest his or her money, that same money, in something else. Lloyd's enables you, in this very precise way, to double your money. And it allowed Fernanda Herford to slightly more than double her money, in a different sense, since the investor was allowed to underwrite business to a premium limit approximately two and a half times that of the wealth shown. In her first year, then, Mrs. Herford showed wealth of seventy-five thousand pounds, insured business of a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, used her basic seventy-five thousand pounds elsewhere, and three years later received four thousand one hundred pounds, which, though on one reading is a 2.73-per-cent return on investment, could also be seen as a 5.46-per-cent return on wealth shown, or, to put it another way, could be seen as money for jam.

This agreeable situation continued for eight more years. The traditional optimistic profit figure that is whispered enticingly to Lloyd's Names is a rather useful ten per cent on business insured. In nine years' trading, Fernanda Herford only once hit that figure. Her returns varied from a low of .78 per cent for 1979 to a high of 11.18 per cent for 1982. On the other hand, she was able to increase her wealth shown to two hundred thousand pounds for 1984-86. By 1989, when the results for 1986 came in, she had made a cumulative total profit of £82,665, or 5.51 per cent on the amount of business underwritten. A way short of the fabled ten per cent, but then Mrs. Herford had been assured that she was not at the risky end of the market. This seemed logical. "I never had big gains, and never thought I was big risk." Indeed, her agent, Anthony Gooda, told her, in a phrase that not surprisingly lingered in her mind, that her investment was "so safe you could mortgage the cat."

In 1987, she increased her underwriting limit to three hundred thousand pounds, and in 1990 received news of her first loss: £13,391, which just about wiped out the previous year's gain of £14,199. Meanwhile, on the advice of her agent, she had increased her premium limit yet again: to three hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds for the years 1988 and 1989, then to five hundred thousand pounds for 1990. In late June of 1991, she received a letter from Anthony Gooda: "I am afraid you have sustained an overall loss [for 1988] of £219,985.27. I should be pleased if you would forward a cheque for this amount . . . by the 12th July. We have been advised by Managing Agents any amounts outstanding after the 15th July will attract interest." Was she tempted to resign at this point, when the over-all result of her eleven years in the market stood at a loss of £150,711? "In 1991, Anthony Gooda told me the worst was over. He told me another ninety thousand pounds was all I could lose. I still thought it was worth it." And, in any case, she was already committed to the gains or losses on business she had underwritten for the years 1989 and 1990. When those results arrived, it was clear that cat-mortgaging time had come. In 1992, she got a call for £527,348.03 for 1989; and this year calls amounting to three hundred and nineteen thousand pounds. There is now a new select breed of people in Britain who might be called deficit millionaires. Fernanda Herford, with an admirable lack of self-pity, reflects that "I have to say I was the sitting target—I trusted, which was my fault." By the time she became a deficit millionairess, her underwriting agents, Gooda Walker, had ceased trading, and Anthony Gooda, from being a sociable, wide-trawling agent, had become one of the most reviled figures in the market. There are three current options open to Mrs. Herford: file for bankruptcy, put herself into the hands of the Lloyd's Members' Hardship Committee, or sue those with whom she dealt for professional negligence. For the moment, she is suing. And one other thing as well: "We're now doing bed-and-breakfast."



RICHARD THOMPSON

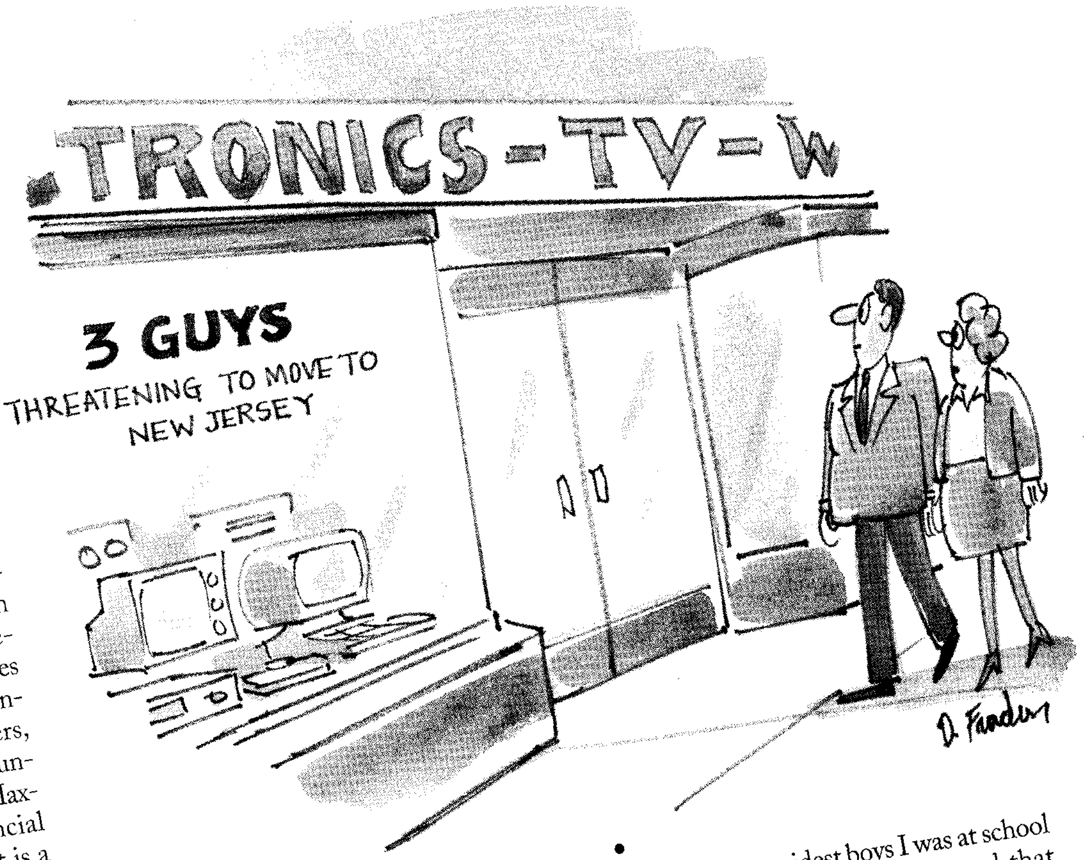
THE month of June, 1993, was a good one for those who scrutinize the *faits divers* for clues to this nation's moral state. There was the luxury clifftop hotel in Scarborough which over a few much photographed days slowly collapsed into the sea; as a mud slide gobbled the building, prospectors lined the shore in the hope of plundering an intact bidet. Then there was the English soccer team's seismic defeat by the supposed ragamuffins of the U.S.A., a result that provoked pert comparisons between team manager Graham Taylor and national manager John Major. And there was the survey of domestic consumer habits which concluded that Britons were Europe's scruffiest dressers. But who needed symbolic indicators of the state's welfare when the real indicators were so particular? On June 22nd, Lloyd's of London announced over-all losses for 1990 of £2,910,000,000, the worst losses in the market's history. The previous year, it had also announced the worst losses in its history. And the year before that it had done the same. Almost five and a half billion pounds over those three years, and with losses of more than a billion already anticipated for 1991. Nor was the monstrous figure of £2,910,000,000 necessarily the final low point: two-fifths of the insurance syndicates (a hundred and fifty-seven out of a total of three hundred and eighty-five) had left 1990 "open"—that is to say, with their accounts unfinalized, since the full extent of the damage could not yet be properly judged. To view it historically: since 1955, the market's many felicitous years have brought cumulative profits of £3.7487 billion, while its few woeful years have brought cumulative losses of £5.3243 billion. Or to put it at the crudest, individual level: if the losses for the four years 1988-91 were spread evenly among all the Names, each would be asked to fork out roughly a quarter of a million pounds.

The estimated £2,910,000,000 was the biggest annual loss achieved by a single British institution since the Coal Board set the national record at £3.9 billion in 1984. But the resonance of Lloyd's cumulative catastrophe is wider than that comparison implies. Most citizens of this country don't know what goes on in the City of London but have an idea of it—as citizens of other large trading nations do—as “the financial capital of the world.” Asked to specify, the Briton might mention as its most famous institutions first the Bank of England and, second, Lloyd’s. “As safe as the Bank of England,” we like to quote, though, after the Bank’s inept failure to regulate B.C.C.I. in the time up to its collapse the catchphrase should perhaps be altered to “as sleepy as the Bank of England.” As for Lloyd’s of London, the popular perception of it has always been as a rather mysterious, Masonic place that began in a Coffee House, that nobody outside understands, but that is obviously very good at whatever it is it might do. And what might it do? Oh, something sui generis, and therefore inexplicable to the unwashed; something very English, rather upper-class, and poshly efficient—say, the financial equivalent of Savile Row or Rolls-Royce. (Savile Row, of course, is not as flush as it used to be, while Rolls-Royce had to be rescued from receivership in the early seventies.) Furthermore, Lloyd’s has managed to present itself as an institution that is both very old and very modern: established before the Bank of England, yet capable of flourishing athletically in Mrs. Thatcher’s world; richly enshrining all manner of quaint traditions, yet working out of a spanking modern building, at No. 1 Lime Street, that was designed by Richard Rogers, the architect of the Beaubourg, in Paris.

Lloyd’s is different from other insurers in two key respects. First, membership is individual. And, second, the liability of that membership is unlimited: in other words, you risk not just your agreed investment but everything you own. You do not buy shares in Lloyd’s, you are elected to it on the basis of your wealth, and the accumulated wealth of the individual members makes up the funds that allow Lloyd’s to trade. This nexus of exclusivity and money meant that until recent years the identity of the few thousand Names was unknown to the wider public; membership in Lloyd’s was a badge of status murmured about rather than confirmed. But “Top People Lose Money” is always a page-filling story, and nowadays high-profile Names are widely named: the Duchess of Kent, Prince and Princess Michael of Kent, Princess Alexandra and her husband, Sir Angus Ogilvy; Major Ronald Ferguson, father of the Duchess of York, and Major Peter Phillips, father of Princess Anne’s first husband; Camilla Parker Bowles, the confidante of Prince Charles; forty-seven Tory M.P.s, including former Prime Minister Edward Heath, Scottish Secretary Ian Lang, Heritage Minister Peter Brooke, Party Chairman Sir Norman Fowler, and Attorney General Sir Nicholas Lyell; various peers, such as Lord Wakeham, the Leader of the Lords, and Lord Hailsham of St. Marylebone; eleven judges and at least fifty-four Queen’s Counsel; Sir Peter de la Billière, commander of the British forces in the Gulf War, and Nick Mason, of Pink Floyd; writers Frederick Forsyth, Melvyn Bragg, Edward de Bono, and Jeffrey Archer; the publisher Lord Weidenfeld and the champion jockey John Francome; former British tennis No. 1s Virginia Wade, Mark Cox, and Buster Mottram; various earls and viscounts, marquesses and baronesses, lords and ladies, squires and squiresses. Recently deceased members include Robert Maxwell; recently resigned members include boxer Henry Cooper, golfer Tony Jacklin, actress Susan Hampshire, jockey Lester Piggott. James Hunt, the former world motor-racing champion, known on the track in his early days as Hunt the Shunt, had a series of terrible shunts at Lloyd’s; he died of a heart attack as the news was still emerging that he was on many of the worst-performing syndicates.

The presence of so many Tory M.P.s in the catalogue of Names briefly raised a merry scenario of political destabilization. A bankrupt M.P. is automatically disqualified from sitting in the House of Commons, and loses his or her seat after six months. According to the *Times*, “at least thirteen” of the forty-seven Tories might be forced into bankruptcy by their losses. With John Major’s parliamentary majority in the trembly mid-teens, and dropping with each by-election, an ironic dénouement looked possible: that of Lloyd’s inadvertently bringing down the party under whose aegis the City and Lloyd’s itself had boomed in the eighties. But a “scenario”—that’s to say, a piece of fictional hoping or fearing—is probably all this will be. In the first place, M.P.s, like other burnt Names, could put themselves in the hands of the Hardship Committee, a process that, even if humiliating, is specifically designed to avoid bankruptcy. And, second, the Tory Party, of all parties, is famously skilled at looking after its own. Well-wishers unbuckle their money belts, and secret funds disgorge their guineas. If Mr. Norman Lamont, the erstwhile Chancellor of the Exchequer, could be slipped £23,114.64 to prevent embarrassment when suing to rid his house of the tenancy of a flagellant prostitute, how much more readily would generous contributors come forth if it were a matter of the Government’s falling.

But the crisis at Lloyd’s has had some unexpected side effects. I wasn’t sure how flip Fernanda Herford was being in her reference to bed-and-breakfast until I read a story in the *Times* at the beginning of August: a company called Discover Britain, based in Worcester, has been enlisting cash-bothered Names to offer their homes as tony B. and B.s. (Its managing director reported, “We have Names in the Cotswolds and in the Home Counties on our books. It gives foreign guests a chance to meet the more comfortably off British people and stay in some of the nicer houses in Britain.”) Elsewhere, the property market and the auction houses have received some tasty bits of business. Henry Cooper sold his three Lonsdale belts (each awarded for three successful defenses of his heavyweight-boxing title) at a Sotheby’s auction for forty-two thousand pounds. The wine trade has felt the benefit of Lloyd’s. Stephen Browett, a director of Farr Vintners, confirms that a number of private cellars have unexpectedly become available. “No one says, ‘I’m selling because I’ve fucked up, I’ve lost money.’ But, on the other hand, often—excuse the pun—the most liquid asset they have is their wine. It’s more immediately salable than works of art or cars, or whatever.” So Farr Vintners now advertises for stock in the pages of the *Financial Times*. In Browett’s opinion, the recent collapse of the port market is partly attributable to events at Lloyd’s. This is confirmed in a back-to-front way by an offer of the 1991 port vintage sent out at the beginning of August by Messrs. Berry Bros. & Rudd, of St. James’s, the most rampantly traditional of London vintners, with a bow-fronted clientele to match. Among the various reasons proposed for buying a few cases of Churchill, Dow, Warre, Graham, or Quinta do Vesuvio was the following: "Alternatively, purchasing 1991 port would also make a decent investment should—heaven forbid—it need to be sold years hence either due to hitherto unnoticed teetotalism in one's offspring, or unforeseen future losses at Lloyd's."


TRONICS-TV-W
3 GUYS
THREATENING TO MOVE TO NEW JERSEY

LLOYD'S is currently enduring its longest and least welcome spell of scrutiny, but its misfortunes receive only the minutest salve of public sympathy. This commodity, so freely bestowed on any three-legged dog that happens to cross the tabloid press, is vehemently, puritanically, even laughingly withheld from Lloyd's Names. Partly, this is because there are more deserving cases out there; for instance, the pensioners of Mirror Group Newspapers, whose fund was systematically plundered by Lloyd's Name Robert Maxwell for his own private financial purposes. Partly, and mainly, it is a question of class, envy, prim-lipped glee, and wise-virgin huzzahing. There's always a sound case for social gloating and belowstairs Schadenfreude when the Master is forced to hock the fish knives. Weren't we told at our mother's knee that there's always a price to be paid, no such thing as money for nothing, let alone a free lunch, and all the other clichés of the prudent? Those a long way from Lloyd's and its social circles can afford an even broader view, and reflect that in the strange and erratic trickle-down of the world's wealth there might well be some social, even moral, justice in the transfer of money from a comfortable upper-middle-class golfing Englishman to, say, a poor, benighted American seaman suffering from terminal asbestosis. As long as it was as simple as that—which of course it turns out not to be.

The Names are well aware that, outside their exclusive stockade, they are pretty much on their own. "You don't get any sympathy," one businesswoman in her thirties told me. "People look at you and think, Well, she must be a rich bitch anyway." Rich, but not *rich* rich; moreover, for a girl of twenty-five, as she was when she became a Name, almost dismayingly careful. A third-generation Name who had worked in the City for several years after graduating, she had all the insider's advantages: she joined her father's agents, who put her on good syndicates; she was warned away from the dangerous areas of the market; knew about taking out stop-loss policies to limit her possible liabilities; and consequently felt she had done her best to safeguard the money her grandfather left her. She started underwriting in 1986, made a small profit in the first two years, and then, in the next three, lost the whole of the trust fund she had come in with. Now she has resigned, not just because she hasn't any money to underwrite with anymore but also because "I can't bear the tension. I have to come to terms with the fact that I am going to lose all my money. Now I wish I'd spent it all on having some fun." She doesn't blame her agents in any way (indeed, her father has stayed with them and is trading through), but in a wider context is more rueful. "When I was growing up, the thickest men I knew went into Lloyd's. I should have thought at the time. At school, I had a friend who couldn't even get into the Navy. He took his maths O level five times and failed it five times. *He* joined Lloyd's. I should have thought then and there."

One who did think along these lines was Max Hastings, the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* since 1986; he once said to a fellow board member of the newspaper, "Rupert, I never joined Lloyd's, because all the stupidest boys I was at school with seemed to go into it . . . and that worried me." (Hastings was at Charterhouse.) But, historically, thickness was no especial handicap in Lloyd's—or, at least, not one that led inevitably to the impoverishment of the members whose interests you supposedly represented. The current chairman of Lloyd's, David Rowland, put it like this in a television interview last October: "Back in the sixties, early seventies, Lloyd's had a cost advantage over the rest of the world of maybe five to seven percentage points. Now, expressed in a different way, you could be quite thick and be a Lloyd's underwriter and make money, because, whether you knew it or not, you had that advantage to play with and you could use it by having lower rates, higher commissions, any competitive tool." And now? By the end of the eighties, in Rowland's view, Lloyd's was operating at a cost disadvantage as other insurers had caught up: "You had to be quite seriously clever to be a Lloyd's underwriter and to make money."

But Lloyd's didn't reach its present crisis, where insiders and outsiders talk equally about the possibility of meltdown, merely because it was overstocked with Old Carthusians owning long names and short brain cells. The nineteen-eighties were particularly rich in bad things happening throughout the world, with the bill for them ending up at Lloyd's. Of course, to a certain extent insurers not only like but depend upon catastrophes. The businesswoman recalled to me the quiet professional satisfaction with which an underwriter friend of hers had greeted the Japan Air Lines jumbo-jet crash of 1985. This is, after all, the logic of the business: if there weren't any burglars, no one would need house insurance against theft. But catastrophes, in a perfect insurance world, should come at the right intervals—just often enough to scare policyholders, harden rates, and make as much profit as possible before the next payout. The European storms of 1987 were said to be the worst for two hundred years; and so they may have been, except that this didn't prevent Nature's coming back for a second bite, and with just as much gourmandizing destructiveness, only three years later. Bad for business. Then there were the various hurricanes—notably Alicia, Gilbert, and Hugo—plus the destruction of the Piper Alpha oil rig, in the North Sea; the Exxon Valdez oil spill; and the 1989 San Francisco earthquake.

These well-publicized losses were not in themselves threatening to Lloyd's; indeed, there is something sexy about being associated with famous disasters. Lloyd's insured the Titanic, paid out a hundred million dollars for the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, covered Hitler's private Junkers airplane, made a fortune out of "death and spare parts" policies during the V-1 and V-2 raids on London, underwrote the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, did well out of the Gulf War. Far less glamorous, and far more damaging to Lloyd's Names, was the increasing realization through the seventies and eighties of the magnitude of present and future claims in two particular areas: pollution and asbestosis. This was "long tail" business, in which a policy might be activated many years after it was written. Sometimes the policies had started off at Lloyd's; sometimes they had started off in the States and been reinsured at Lloyd's; sometimes they had started off at Lloyd's, been reinsured in the States, and then reinsured back again at Lloyd's. Whichever way, once the claims began coming in, once American lawyers started getting busy and American courts generous, the bill became enormous and continuing.

Another, more self-inflicted piece of damage was a practice of reinsurance popular at Lloyd's in the nineteen-eighties. Just as bookmakers faced with money pouring in on the Kentucky Derby favorite minimize their potential losses by laying off the bets elsewhere, so insurers do the same. But, whereas among the wise gentlemen of the turf one firm of bookmakers will devolve its liability onto another firm, at Lloyd's the risk was kept within the same market. The original insurers of a big risk would take out reinsurance in case claims exceeded a certain figure; the reinsurers would then seek to lay off their risk with a new layer of reinsurance, and so on along the chain. The advantage to Lloyd's was that with each reinsurance the underwriter took a premium and the broker a commission; often the same piece of business might go through the same syndicates and companies several times, to everyone's short-term advantage. The system became known as London Market Excess, or L.M.X., and the chain of reinsurance was known colloquially as "the spiral." The thinking behind it was based on the belief—or the hope—that there was little likelihood of a claim's going up beyond a certain point: a thousand roofs might blow off in a tempest, but not ten thousand; an oil rig might experience a small explosion but not a big one. Therefore, as you got to the top end of the spiral the premiums got smaller, and the final reinsurers were increasingly ill-equipped to pay a claim when a big disaster occurred. It is like pass the parcel: good fun until the music stops. Then it becomes very expensive. In the case of the Piper Alpha oil rig, for instance, which blew up in July, 1988, the basic sum for which it was insured was seven hundred million dollars. But that amount was reinsured and reinsured—to the great profit of brokers and underwriters—so that by the end of the spiral of reinsurance a total of fifteen billion dollars was sloshing through the system, "which means," as one underwriter commented, "that in some syndicates it must have passed through that syndicate fifty times." The losers, at the end of the day, were the Lloyd's Names: in 1989, a mere fourteen L.M.X. syndicates lost nine hundred and fifty-two million pounds, or nearly half the market's total losses.

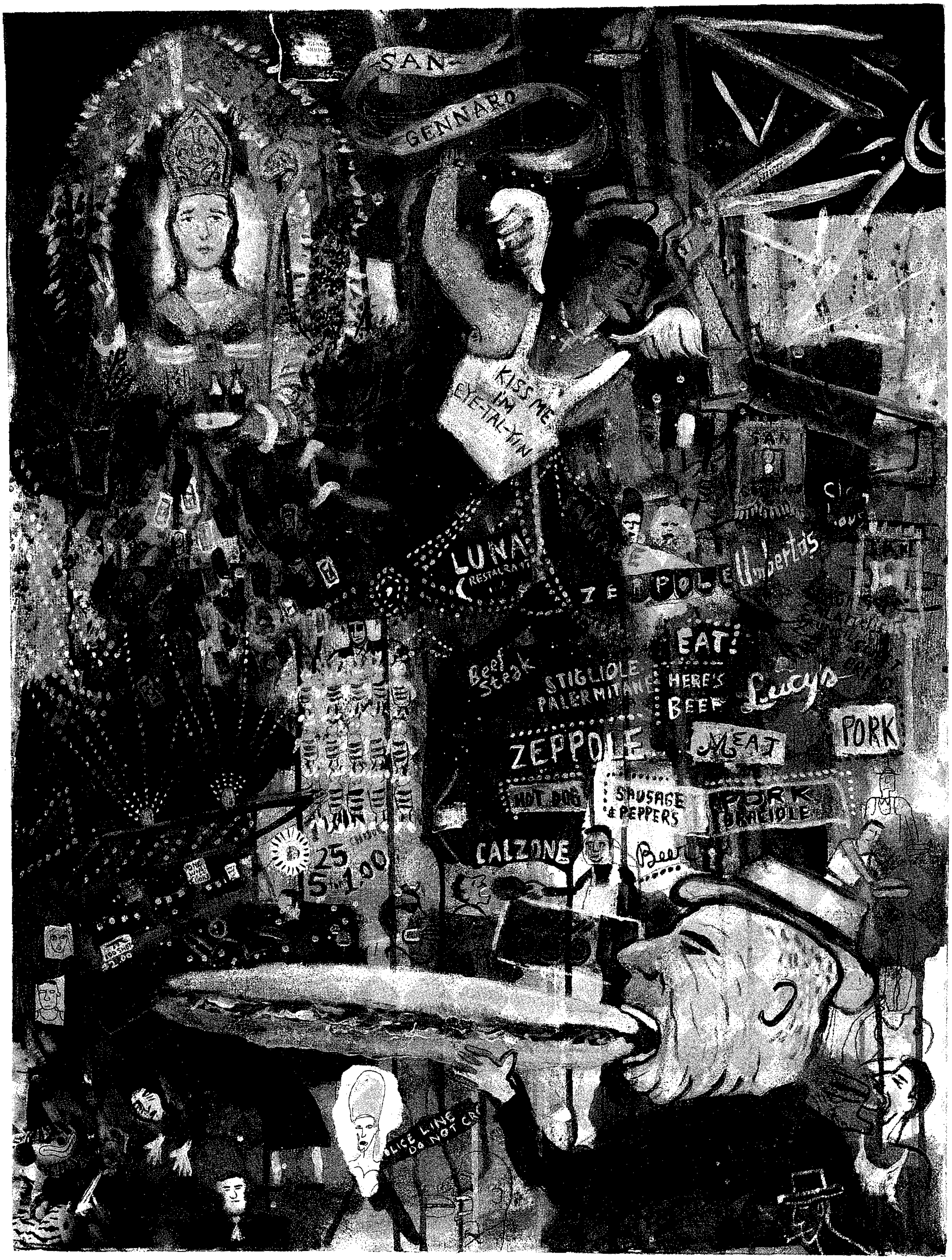
London Market Excess developed for a series of interlocking reasons: greed, of course; the ease with which it could be done ("Making a turn"—in the spiral—"was the easiest way to make money," one underwriter said); and the presence of spare capacity in the market. Unreal business like L.M.X. was written because there wasn't enough real business out there to write. And the reason for this was that during the nineteen-eighties Lloyd's participating membership—and hence its underwriting capacity—expanded faster than the market did.

It may have been noticed that on the list of high-profile Lloyd's Names given earlier some were extremely posh, but others were—well, less than extremely posh. Starting in the mid-nineteen-seventies, the graph of membership went Himalayan. Between 1955 and 1975, the numbers had gently doubled, from 3,917 to 7,710; by 1978, they had virtually doubled again, to 14,134; then they jumped greedily through the eighties to an all-time peak of 34,218 in 1989. In the single year of 1977, 3,636 new Names were admitted; back in 1953, the entire membership had amounted to only 3,399. Both the nature of the members and the nature of the recruitment had changed. No longer was it a case of the tweedy third baronet, having slaughtered a bucketful of grouse, deciding over the crusted port that it was time to put young Marmaduke up for Lloyd's. Now it was a matter of active recruiters scouring for business: the accountant suggesting to the widow that Lloyd's was a safe place for her inheritance; the commission tout working the dinner tables; the members' agent specializing in one particular slice of high earners. In some cases, it was still a matter of the lowered voice and the "I could probably get you into Lloyd's, old boy," but often the approach was much more blatant—or, if you prefer, businesslike. In June of 1988, Nicholas Lander sold his successful Soho restaurant L'Escargot, a piece of news that made the papers. Shortly afterward, an accountant he had never met phoned him up out of the blue and began lauding the tax advantages to be had from joining Lloyd's. Lander declined the approach partly out of caution—"I don't understand the world of insurance and reinsurance"—but mainly for a more forthright reason: "I wasn't going to hand my money over to a bunch of upper-class twits to play with."

Others were more flattered. A recruiter in Hamilton, Ontario, signed up forty or more Canadian doctors and den-

ARTIST AT LARGE BY JOSH GOSFIELD

# SAN GENNARO


SAN
GENNARO
KISS ME I'M EYE-TAL-YUN
LUNA RESTAURANT
ZEPPOLE
Umberto's
EAT!
Beef Steak
STIGLIOLE PALERMITANE
HERE'S BEEF
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SAUSAGE & PEPPERS
PORK BRACIOLE
CALZONE
Beer
25
5 for 1.00
OLICE LINE DO NOT CR

*Long before malls, Little Italy's Feast of San Gennaro gave New Yorkers an opportunity to meet, overeat, and buy too many tchotchkes in one easy stroll along six blocks of Mulberry Street for eleven nights each September. Almost every neighborhood has its own street fair nowadays, and San Gennaro, which ends September 19th this year, is the granddaddy of them all.*

tists. In England, a members' agent named Robin Kingsley, whose father had played Davis Cup tennis for Britain, used the Wimbledon connection to sign up a locker room of Names for his Lime Street Underwriting Agencies; Virginia Wade, Buster Mottram and his father, Mark Cox, and the wife of former British No. 1 Roger Taylor. Mottram was approached by a Kingsley representative in 1983, while he was in the bath after losing a doubles match at Wimbledon. Ten years later, he was taking a much more serious bath: many Lime Street Names had been put on L.M.X. syndicates and were heading toward losses of two million pounds each. At the time, the come-on from Lloyd's to groups like tennis stars was plausible enough: Here you are, still young but quite possibly at the peak of your earning power, why not think about making your pile work for you after your racquet has been laid to rest in its press? Besides, this was the nineteen-eighties, Mrs. Thatcher's eighties; new money was as good as old, and Lloyd's was in this respect becoming more democratic. The financial conditions for joining were now less stringent and the rules more laxly monitored. (In theory, you were not allowed to put up your principal residence as part of the wealth you showed, but Lloyd's happily accepted a bank guarantee instead, and since the bank guarantee was based on a charge upon your house the effect was the same.) New money rushed to join Lloyd's. But one of the differences between old money and new money is that new money tends to be more fragile. Old money tends to have more money than new money—an advantage when you come to the concept of unlimited liability. Moreover, old money, having been at Lloyd's for longer, was more likely to find itself on the safer and more profitable syndicates. New money tended to be less wise, or more easily led. In the early nineteen-eighties, during an exchange about accountability at Lloyd's, one underwriter brutally—or realistically—dismissed the new intake in the following way: "If God had not meant them to be sheared, He would not have made them sheep."

But to most outside observers Lloyd's in the nineteen-eighties looked like a success story: rising membership, continuing profits, an old institution adapting to the modern world, with symbolic proof of that adaptation in the market's new premises. Richard Rogers' building, which opened in 1986, is spectacular and luxurious: an elegant financial factory with what was once the largest atrium in Europe. Built on principles of high tech, energy saving, and maximum space flexibility, it is—like the Beaubourg—an inside-out construction, with all the ductwork, service piping, and elevators on the outside, allowing a free, uncluttered interior without any central supporting core. It deliberately lacks the Beaubourg's spirited bursts of color: apart from a dull yellow on the stylish German escalators, a splash of red for the fire bells, and green for the floor numbers, the hues are muted, with a soft light seeming to allow maximum concentration on the business of making money. As one of the Richard Rogers Partnership put it to me, "Basically, they said we could have any color we liked as long as it was gray." The result led, predictably, to what is called a "row," which, just as predictably, seemed to consist of a few nonspecialist journalists moaning on about modern architecture and second-guessing the Prince of Wales. It also led to one or two rather good jokes. Lloyd's, it was said, had started in a Coffee House and ended up in a percolator. Lloyd's, it was said, was the only building in London that had all the guts on the outside and all the assholes on the inside.

Within the gray money-shed sit sober-suited underwriters, who breach the nothing-but-gray rule only with their stripy golf umbrellas. Brokers bustle among the underwriters' "boxes," as their desks are known, with fat leather document cases; they loiter attentively, like sixth formers near a schoolmaster, until the underwriter is ready for them. There is none of that yelping and high-fiving which make trading in futures resemble a contact sport. Here there are computer screens, intense but discreet conversation, the pencilled exchange of hieroglyphs, and the muted seep of testosterone: out of the 3,593 current "working members"—agents, underwriters, and brokers—only 118 are female. The liveried underlings, known as "waiters," are male,

*"I put in a full day with the big cats, Kasmer. I need a sympathetic human cannonball I can come home to."*

too, and are among the intermittent reminders of the Lloyd's tradition. The most famous of these is the Lutine Bell, which occupies a central position on the main trading floor, deep below the vaulted atrium, and is housed in a curious mahogany edifice halfway between a cathedral baldachin and the sort of raised desk occupied by Madame in an old-fashioned French restaurant. The Bell was rescued in 1857 from the Lloyd's-insured H.M.S. Lutine, and has been ritually rung ever since, once for disaster and twice for good news. A dozen yards away, on a broad mahogany lectern, are a pair of marine loss-books, displayed side by side. In the left-hand one, written out in stately quill pen, are the week's disasters from a hundred years ago; in the right-hand book, in slightly less stately quilling, are the current week's. On July 19th, the contemporary loss-book revealed a quiet time on the Lloyd's-protected oceans. Nothing to report for a week—not since Monday the twelfth, when the following events were recorded: "Zam Zam St Vincent and Grenadines motor 1588 tons gross built 1966 abandoned in sinking condition lat 12.00 N., long 49.45 E July 9 Bahrein Radio." And, beneath it, a more interesting plot: "Ham 308 Dutch motor suction dredger had explosion in engine room, extensively damaged after picking up bomb near Tsing Yi Island, Hong Kong, Feb 25. Settled as a War constructive total loss. 5613 tons gross, built 1968."

Upstairs, on the eleventh floor, is another part of the Lloyd's tradition: the Adam Room, removed from Bowood House, Wiltshire, and installed in successive Lloyd's buildings as the Committee Room. It comes complete with wall moldings, chandeliers, pictures, committee table, and armchairs, all in a non-gray color combination, and is surrounded by a walkway that permits you to stroll round it and peer in. You could make a pretty symbol out of the Adam Room: here the Lloyd's Committee meets in period surroundings, in an architectural cocoon, shut off from the outside world. To be fair, though, you could just as easily reverse the symbol. Here is a room that appears antique but discloses hidden modernity: the chandeliers, for instance, are controlled by dimmer switches; at one end, the floor disgorges a huge screen, while at the other a painting swivels away to reveal the projection room. Looked at like this, it is less a room mired in the past than one wired for Goldfinger.

I PASSED the sign to Bowood House on my way to visit a widow in the West Country who cannot be named, because she is with The Hardship, as the Lloyd's Members' Hardship Committee is known, and, at the time, part of the deal with The Hardship was that you didn't talk about it. Our meeting is initially shadowed by the morning's news of a fifty-one-year-old North London solicitor who had hanged himself in despair after incurring losses on the Lloyd's market. His widow gave evidence to the Hornsey Coroner's Court: "He was told he might have to go bankrupt and would not be able to practice as a solicitor. He said they asked for more and more money." It is hard to estimate the number of "Lloyd's suicides," since troubles always compound one another and are rarely separable out as pure causes. Besides, there is no central clearing house for such statistics. One well-positioned Name gave me the figure of "seven, to my personal knowledge."

Those not ground down or appallingly depressed by their experiences with Lloyd's are likely to be feistily skeptical about the whole market. Certainly this is the case with the West Country Widow, now in her seventies, who lives with a vivacious, not to say deeply neurotic, pug dog. Around her village lies flat, rather overmanicured pasturage riddled with bed-and-breakfast cottages; Arabella's pony frolics in the paddock; the passing double-decker bus has a recruitment ad for the British Army on the back; and every other dwelling is called The Coach House or Ye Olde Forge. The Widow, on the other hand, lives in an undistinguished cul-de-sac, in a modest semi-detached house of the sort it would seem pretentious to give a name to. But the Widow has defiantly baptized her house, and the nameplate, in brown wood with sunken black lettering, is the first thing you see as you enter her inside porch. This dwelling, it tells you, is called SDYOLLKCUF, which has a Celtic, perhaps a Cornish, feel to it, though if you read it backward you find it altogether more Anglo-Saxon.

"Have you seen this?" she asks as her pug welcomingly assaults my shoelaces. She hands me a cutting from the *Daily Mail's* women's page. It shows a photograph of Dr. Mary Archer, the head of the Hardship Committee, modelling a cocktail dress by the French designer Nicole Manier: a flouncy black above-the-knee number, with diaphanous sleeves and shoulder bits, topped off by a provoking headdress of ostrich feathers, or whatever are used nowadays in their stead. "Probably costs more than she's going to give me to live on for a year," grumps the Widow. Across the bottom of the picture she has written "This woman is unfit to be Chairman of the Hardship Committee." I do not answer her question as to whether or not I have seen the cutting; in fact, I was shown it only two days earlier, in Chelsea, at the house of the Deficit Millionairess. It is clearly a much circulated and efficient inducer of rage.

The Widow's story goes like this: Her husband died in the mid-sixties, at a time when death duties between spouses were heavier than they are now. The house in which they had lived became harder for her to manage. "My accountant suggested I become a member of Lloyd's, and, most unfortunately, I had a cousin working at Lloyd's for Anthony Gooda." She began underwriting in 1978. Her initial premium limit was a hundred thousand pounds; subsequently, it was raised to a hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds and then to a hundred and eighty-eight thousand pounds, on both occasions, she said, "without explaining." Over the first twelve years of membership, she received thirty-nine thousand pounds, and concluded from the size of her checks that she was on low-risk syndicates. Her accountant agreed, telling her, "Your lot must be safe, because they pay so little." Then the bills started. The first was for a hundred and twenty thousand pounds, of which she managed to pay eighty thousand. Then more and more. Like Fernanda Herford, she had the hazy illusion that some rough equity guided her dealings at Lloyd's, and that you wouldn't—couldn't, shouldn't—lose a larger sum than the one you underwrote. But unlimited liability means what it says: "They say now I owe them three hundred and fifty thousand pounds." How did she react? "I walked about shaking and empty. I only got through with gin and arnica—it's a homeopathic remedy for shock—God, and a lot of friends."

Rather than face a writ for debt, she went to The Hardship. "It took us three weeks to fill up the form." She complains of "arrogant letters" from The Hardship, and great silences. She feels in limbo, waiting for The Hardship to propose its terms of settlement: "They say, 'You will exist on our guidelines,' but they don't tell you what they are." She knows the process, however: "They take all the Lloyd's funds, and this house when I'm dead, and I pay all the capital gains on my funds and they take them as well." From being someone who worked twelve hours a day with horses and let Lloyd's quietly make her a little bit extra, she has become someone who spends several hours of most days dealing with forms, demands, action groups, and so on. "The worst part is the post. You literally shake for half an hour when it comes." From being someone who believed that Lloyd's was "the highest name of honesty," she has become someone who views it as "a cesspit of dishonesty." From being a Lloyd's investor, she has become a Lloyd's pensioner.

The Widow is exactly the sort of person who should never have been made a Name, and she knows it: "They took in so many little people like me to spread the risk." Later that day, I talked to a Name at the other end of the spectrum—much more the classic Lloyd's investor. Peter Dewe-Mathews was a chartered accountant for ten years, then began setting up health-care businesses and selling them on. We shuffle uneasily around the word "entrepreneur," and agree to use it only in inverted commas. He started underwriting in 1987, when he found he had a large number of shares locked into a public company he had built up, and wanted to use them to raise more than the three per cent or so they yielded; he hoped, through Lloyd's, to raise that three per cent to more like five per cent. "It seemed like a reasonable thing to do," he remembers. In fact, 1987, the year after the new building opened, was probably the worst time to join Lloyd's. In that last of the boom recruiting years, 2,572 new members were elected, just before the wallet-scorching started.

Dewe-Mathews, unlike the Widow, was professional enough to protect himself at every turn. He sacked his first firm of agents, because he found them "a bunch of spivs"; he took out stop-loss insurance; he had himself taken off one syndicate when he saw that they didn't know how to write accounts, and reckoned that if they couldn't write accounts they probably couldn't write insurance; and he got the right advice when he asked about L.M.X. syndicates, being told to keep off them "for a few years." He knew his way around, could read a balance sheet in the way that most "external" Names couldn't, and went in, as he says, "with my eyes open." So how much money has he made? He laughs. "I haven't made a pfennig." He broke even the first year, and since then . . . He tells me a figure in confidence. He has lost not just pfennigs but marks. So is he getting out? Not for the moment. "Insurance runs on an eight-to-ten-year cycle. So '93, '94, '95 are theoretically going to be the top. If Lloyd's doesn't have the capacity to make a profit then, where's its future?"

A Conservative M.P., speaking in the House of Commons, referred to the epidemic of money-loss among Lloyd's Names as "the H.I.V. of the upper-middle classes." Tasteless, if you wish, but there are apt points of comparison. First, there is a moment, a key and usually insouciant moment, when the Name has unprotected financial intercourse with Lloyd's, when he or she acknowledges the principle of unlimited liability. Second, there is a time gap when things are hunky-dory, when you really do seem to be getting something for nothing. Third, there is a calamitous realization that you are lost, that your life has changed forever, and that others will unsympathetically point the finger at you and seek to use you in a moral argument. *That's* what comes of wanting too much out of life/being greedy/not thinking

## THAT LONELY SHOE LYING ON THE ROAD

One sad shoe that someone has probably flung
out of a car or truck. Why only one?

This happens on an average one year
in four. But always throughout my
life, my travels, I see it like
a memorandum. Something I have
forgotten to remember,

that there are always
mysteries in life. That shoes
do not always go in pairs, any more
than we do. That one fits;
the other not. That children can
thoughtlessly and in a merry fashion
chuck out someone's shoe, split up
someone's life.

But usually that shoe that I
see is a man's, old, worn, the sole
parted from the upper.
Then why did the owner keep the other,
keep it to himself? Was he
afraid (as I so often am with
inanimate objects) to hurt its feelings?

That one shoe in the road invokes
my awe and my sad pity.

—Muriel Spark

ahead/listening to the siren voices of financial voluptuaries.

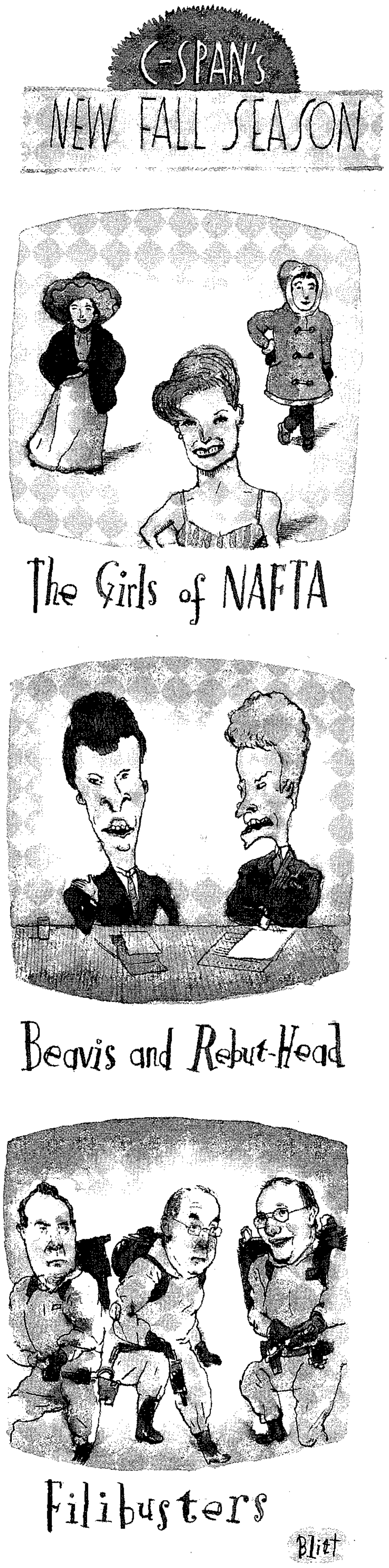
Seduction and betrayal. The first approach comes when you are most relaxed: on the golf course, in your bath after Wimbledon, around the dinner table. "The entertaining is prodigious," Fernanda Herford confirmed. Clive Francis, a former Royal Air Force squadron leader, told me, "I was hooked by flattery and greed." I talked to one woman who joined because her marriage was on the rocks and a banker friend suggested that membership would give her financial security. (She is now "bust four or five times," a deficit millionairess twice over.) The atavistic appeal of Lloyd's was just as big, if not bigger, for new money as for old money. Buster Mottram describes himself as being "mesmerized by the Lloyd's myth." The daughter of a trade unionist, herself a woman of manifest common sense, told me, "I grew up on a council estate, and there is a sense of achievement in becoming part of an establishment." This normal human vanity was played upon with brutal success in the eighties.

The moment of unprotected financial intercourse with Lloyd's occurs at their place, not yours. First, the agent talks the prospective member through the terms on which he or she is joining. Memories of the agent's counselling vary directly with the Name's subsequent experience at Lloyd's. Those I talked to who had traded well—or, at least, not disastrously—remembered things being explained with due gravity; those who had gone down most heavily remember only a jollity that in retrospect seems insulting. Fernanda Herford said, "Certainly I understood [the concept of unlimited liability], but there was a great deal of ho-ho-ho." Buster Mottram was told that unlimited liability was theoretical, "like a meteor hitting London—an act of God, nothing more serious than that." A successful musician was told, "If you have twenty thousand pounds in the bank, you'll never need more than that. And if you're a person who can't sleep at night, take out a stop-loss policy." (She and her husband took out twenty-nine stop-loss policies over the years, and are down four million between the two of them.) The West Country Widow recalls the softening up she received in the offices of the agent Anthony Gooda: "They said, 'You realize you will be warned about unlimited liability?' and I said should I back out, and they roared with laughter and said, 'Absolute nonsense, it's never happened and it never will. We took a shaker on Hurricane Betsy, but we soon made up for that.' "

Thus prepared, the Name is then brought before the Rota Committee of Lloyd's, where matters are explained again. The Rota Committee consists of two senior members of the market and a protocol secretary—or, if you prefer the words of the West Country Widow, three "bumbling shaking old fools." Sir Peter Miller, the chairman of Lloyd's from 1984 to 1987, recalled in 1991 the way he used to induct new members: "I think the example I usually used was that you were absolutely liable for your last penny farthing, right down to the cufflinks in your shirt, and if it was a lady, I usually said, well, down to the earrings in your ear, my dear." That phrase "down to your last cufflink" is a famous Lloyd's tag, part of the mystique, part of the sexiness of theoretical loss set against the much greater sexiness of almost certain gain. Most Names I talked to remembered those words, or something similar. No one suggested that the concept of unlimited liability was in any way concealed from them by the Rota Committee. On the other hand, few remember the occasion as being more than merely ceremonial. The businesswoman in her thirties, who at twenty-five was inducted in honored solitariness, recalled, "That stupid thing in front of the table. You sit outside with your agent, having been given a good lunch. It's built up as a great thing and an honor, but then you go up there and everyone's dressed up to the nines and it's over in seconds." Other Names were dubbed in groups of anything from two or three up to a score and more. Clive Francis, the ex-squadron leader, remembered the moment when the sacred words "unlimited liability" were used. He remembered it because his agent nudged him and whispered, "They have to say that." They do indeed. Fifteen years on, he owes over two million pounds.

What few of those Names signed up in the eighties realized was that their recruiter was often paid a fee. Surely the chap who drank at your table and admired your pictures and murmured, "I could get you into Lloyd's, old boy,"

*"I'd like to buy everyone a drink. All I ask in return is that you listen patiently to my shallow and simplistic views on a broad range of social and political issues."*



wasn't in it for a kickback? After all, you were being asked to join an honorable club in which members were all on the same side, weren't you? But Francis later found out that the dinner acquaintance who sweet-talked him got a thank-you check for three thousand pounds. Other commission touts might receive an annual bounty: say, five hundred pounds for each year the Name stayed with the members' agent for whom he had been snaffled. And fees are, of course, negotiable: I heard of a recruiter who would go to the agent and say, "I've got a prospective member—what terms?"

As for who was on whose side, this was the key question for Names joining Lloyd's over the last fifteen years or so, and one they did not normally think of posing until it was far too late. The deal, as proposed, seemed magical, unmissable. "You send no money, we just send you a check every year" is how it was characterized to Francis. "I mean," he went on reflectively, "looking back, what a tit!" Lloyd's and its agents had a good way of talking money and yet not talking money. For instance, as long as you got your check you probably didn't look too closely at the way your winnings were computed. You might think it fine that your agent, who was responsible for placing you on the best underwriting syndicates he was able to, would take twenty per cent of your profits. (This "agent" might be split into two—a members' agent, who dealt directly with you, and a managing agent, who dealt with the underwriters—in which case the former might take eight per cent and the latter twelve per cent.) Twenty per cent of profits, however, worked like this: Assume you were placed on fifteen syndicates, ten of which made money and five of which didn't. The former made, say, ten thousand pounds and the latter lost five thousand pounds. Balance in your favor, five thousand pounds. But the agent took his twenty per cent on your ten thousand pounds of raw profit, leaving you with a net profit of three thousand.

The Lloyd's market is divided into working and external members, in a traditional ratio of about twenty per cent to eighty per cent. (As of August 4, 1993, there were 3,593 working members and 15,853 external members.) The working members underwrite insurance, just as you do; and they, too, want to be on the best syndicates, just as you do. But if you were an underwriter putting together a syndicate, whom would you rather have on it: a Widow from the West Country or an influential broker who, if he did well out of your syndicate, might repay the favor by bringing you some of his best business? That the market was heavily weighted toward insiders and against outsiders seems with hindsight obvious, logical, and consistent with human nature; that it didn't seem so at the time is a tribute partly to Lloyd's effective mystique and also to its effective secrecy. The figures simply weren't available. In the last year or so, however, computer analysis has been used to prove what many suspected: that external Names tended to be dumped on duff, high-risk syndicates, while working Names creamed off the best business. A breakdown on all the Gooda Walker members for the years 1983 to 1989 (when the dangers of the L.M.X. spiral were being run) shows that only ten per cent were insider Names—half what you might expect if the market dealt fairly between the two segments of its membership. On Syndicate 387, a key location of financial horror, only three per cent of the Names were insiders. Analysis was also made of the most profitable syndicates in all the four main insurance categories for 1991-92. Twenty Names appeared on three of those four syndicates, and were therefore likely to be the highest earners in the market; of those twenty, eleven were insiders, and, of those eleven, four are or have been on the Council of Lloyd's. Finally, there was a particularly nice computer breakdown on the correlation between geographical distance from No. 1 Lime Street and chances of being put on the better syndicates. This confirmed that Australia was a very bad place to live if you were a Lloyd's Name.

When I asked Peter Middleton, the chief executive of Lloyd's, about the weighting of the market, he replied, "In any activity, the professionals will know more than the others," and cited car maintenance as an analogy. You would not expect the mechanic at your local garage to lavish as much care on your vehicle as he did on his own, though you would expect him to do a good job on your car in return for a proper fee. This is all true, of course, though what happened to many external Names who sent their car to the Lloyd's Servicing Center in the nineteen-eighties was that they got it back with four bald tires and somebody else's radio.

THE first quotation in the Oxford English Dictionary for the word "Lloyd's" has a prophetic aptness. Here is Maria Edgeworth writing to her mother on March 4, 1819:

> Mr. Busk Blair's son in law was as great a gamester as Mr. Blair. Once he won £30,000 by a bit of gambling insurance on 2 missing East India ships. The ships re-appeared. The underwriters were obliged to pay him but it was suspected that he had some private intelligence—in short that there was some foul play. He could never shew his face at Lloyd's afterwards.

Much of Lloyd's in the nineteen-eighties is here: the value of raw intelligence, the gambling aspect, the tickle of fraud. When a famous institution is making money, the occasional tweak of criminality can usually be covered up (and Lloyd's has always been a successfully closed society; the first photograph of the Committee, for instance, did not appear until 1960). Just a case of one rotten apple in the barrel, bung it out, mum's the word, more profits next year, punters happy. This was the theme song, and through most of the eighties it charmed the ear. What had to be kept quiet, or talked down, or minimized, was a tangy succession of upsets, rogueries, and scandals. Or, as Peter Middleton, referring to those times, put it—and, yes, we are back on motoring again—"what we had in Lloyd's was a speed limit of seventy miles per hour on the motorway and no patrol cars, so some people were doing a hundred and thirty miles per hour and most about ninety-five."

Chief among the motorway violations were the following: the Sasse affair, of the late nineteen-seventies, in which syndicate members for the first time refused en masse to pay their bills, were sued by Lloyd's, and sued Lloyd's in return; the Howden scandal, in which the American insurance brokers Alexander & Alexander bought a firm of Lloyd's brokers for three hundred million dollars and discovered on subsequent auditing a financial hole of anything up to fifty-five million dollars; the Cameron-Webb affair, the biggest fraud in Lloyd's history, whose two chief villains were allowed to slip unprosecuted into foreign retirement; the flourishing of "baby syndicates," devoted to skimming off the best business for Lloyd's insiders; the case of Sir Peter Green, the very chairman of Lloyd's who was found guilty of "discreditable conduct," fined thirty-three thousand pounds, and kicked out of Lloyd's after channelling his Names' money into a Cayman Islands company he'd forgotten to tell them about; and the Outhwaite affair, in which counsel for Outhwaite Names suing their agent recently told the court that "it is probably the case that never in the commercial history of the City of London has so much of other people's money been lost by the single-handed negligence of one man." Ian Posgate, one of the chief underwriting barons of the time (who was himself banned from being a working Name), spoke of that period as the insider: "If you are making a good living, if you have self-regulation, if you are outside exchange control, it's human nature to get greedier and greedier and greedier." Ian Hay Davison, the chief executive of Lloyd's from 1983 to 1986, spoke as the motorway patrolman: he thought it was a question of sorting out a few rotten apples but discovered that "the barrel itself . . . was in some danger of being tainted." Christopher Hird, a financial journalist, spoke as the outside observer: Lloyd's in the nineteen-eighties "resembled a garden in which the rabbits were in charge of the lettuce."

As long as the "rotten apple" theory could be maintained, as long as the extent of insider weighting was kept largely secret (and as long as profits continued), investors gave their trust as well as their money. What has happened in the last few years is that the element of trust has very largely broken down. By April of this year, there were thirty-three groups of Names and ex-Names organized for defensive and offensive purposes, and by June the number of such members suing their professional advisers had reached the astonishing figure of seventeen thousand. Seventeen thousand out of a membership of thirty-four thousand: deduct twenty per cent for working Names, and you get something over sixty per cent.

Imagine a school in which sixty per cent of parents were suing the teachers for badly educating their children. Imagine a restaurant in which sixty per cent of customers were suing the management over food poisoning. Such a school, such a restaurant would not survive for long, however impressive the number of people it might have educated or fed in the past. Nor is such legal action going to be speedily concluded. According to the Lloyd's Names Associations Working Party, a body made up of the leaders of individual action groups, "the scene is set fair for five to ten years of litigation which will involve Members' Agents, Managing Agents, Directors of Agencies, individual underwriters, auditors, brokers, errors and omissions underwriters and the Corporation of Lloyd's itself."

Out there, the revolt of the shires is in earnest. The Names have witnessed negligence, fraud, complacency, and sardonic uncaringness; they have discovered the realities of money, how it works, and how those who live off it work. But they have also experienced something beyond this, something that at first sounds decidedly quaint: the offense against honor. What they were sold when they joined Lloyd's was the concept of an honorable society, operating on trust, on shared values, on everyone's being "one of us." Instead, they have discovered that honor is a one-way street. Lloyd's called on them the first year, and they paid; it called on them the second year, and they paid, while being promised that things would be better in the third year; the third year came, and it was much, much worse, while forecasts for the next year were bad, too. Even the Mafia supposedly looks after the little boot-mender who falls on stony times; Lloyd's sent in Dr. Archer and The Hardship. The Names felt mocked and abandoned, used and abused. Fernanda Herford quoted to me a dictum from the portable philosophy of Lloyd's: "See a mug, use a mug." Hence the members who decline to pay with a strained cheerfulness born of desperation. Hence the frequently heard comment that if it weren't for this, or if it weren't for that, the Name would hide what money remained, or give it away, or go abroad and let Lloyd's get stuffed. I heard of elderly relatives being asked to change their wills to avoid leaving money to a beloved burnt Name, because otherwise Lloyd's would purloin it: leave it to the spouse, the child, the non-Name instead. I heard of ingenious money-distancing schemes. I heard of a couple planning to divorce under Scottish law, then have the wife go bankrupt, then marry again, all in order to obtain some obscure benefit and somehow tinily defeat Lloyd's. As one Name put it to me in a winky, nose-tapping way, "we've got far more time to think about it than the Hardship Committee."

Lloyd's itself is currently behaving like an old career criminal finally going straight. It is clean-fingernail time in the market, with shining morning faces presented to the world. There is much talk of a "transparent society," of healthiness, efficiency, cost reductions. Peter Middleton points to the introduction of "simple management practice that passes for normal everywhere else." Joint Deputy Chairman Robert Hiscox bullishly asserts that "we're now lean, keen, and our overheads are bloody low." A new business plan has been announced, radically reforming the investment base of the market. Insurance rates are hardening, there is work to be done, business to be written, a great institution to be saved; and in the meantime there is this bunch of dismissed peasants still whining at the gate about things that happened years ago. Lloyd's insiders occasionally seem baffled at the way journalists and burnt Names willfully ignore what they see as the main story—how the market is to be saved—and ghoulishly concentrate on the past. In this respect, Lloyd's is like a dowager wearing a necklace of herring. Her frock is new, her seams are straight, her makeup newly applied: so why do people go on and on about the smell of herring?

As far as the Names are concerned, many offenses still rankle. For instance, when the burnt Names first started to organize, Lloyd's was deliberately obstructive; until Peter Middleton changed the rules, action groups simply couldn't discover who else was out there suffering in silence, assuming there was nothing to do except splint the upper lip. And each day seems to bring a new offense. Thus, the rescue plan for Lloyd's depends upon getting corporate capital into the market for the first time, and to do so seductively it offers terms that seem to taunt the burnt Names: limited liability, plus protection from earlier market losses. It is as if the old Names, with their unlimited liability and open years, were being shunted off into a financial isolation ward for infectious cases. Another offense is the discovery that eleven years ago, after an auditors' report stressing the unquantifiable losses likely to arise from asbestosis claims, the deputy chairman of Lloyd's wrote to agents that they were "strongly advised to inform their names of their involvement with asbestosis claims and the manner in which their syndicates' current and potential liabilities have been covered." (Yet few Names, let alone those brought in after 1982, seem to have been warned about asbestosis.) There is the discovery, all too late in the day, of who is for you and who against you. "I always thought my agent was on my side," a farmer complained to me. "But they're acting very like debt collectors. I suppose they're afraid of Lloyd's going bust and them losing their jobs." Then there is the survey of company directors' pay in the August, 1993, issue of the magazine *Labour Research:* deficit millionaires (there are perhaps four hundred or so owing over a million pounds, and a hundred and fifty or more owing two million pounds plus) might look askance at the salaries of some well-known Lloyd's brokers. William Brown, chairman of Walsham Brothers, who made a fortune out of L.M.X. reinsurance, last year was paid £3,653,346, a shocking 50.3-per-cent drop from what he had been paid the previous year. On the other hand, Matthew Harding, the chairman of Benfield reinsurance brokers, got a fifty-three-per-cent pay rise, taking him to £2,275,523. (Two other Benfield directors each earned more than £1,245,000.) In the face of such offense, and such market realities, expressions of anger such as that from the investor Alan Price, after a June 22nd meeting at the Royal Festival Hall, are hardly surprising. "These underwriters should count themselves lucky that Lloyd's is not based in the Middle East," he said. "If it were, a large number of these wretches would now be walking around minus one hand. Some would be missing an arm and a leg." A grim English humor survives even in these circumstances, an arm and a leg being exactly what many Lloyd's Names have lost.

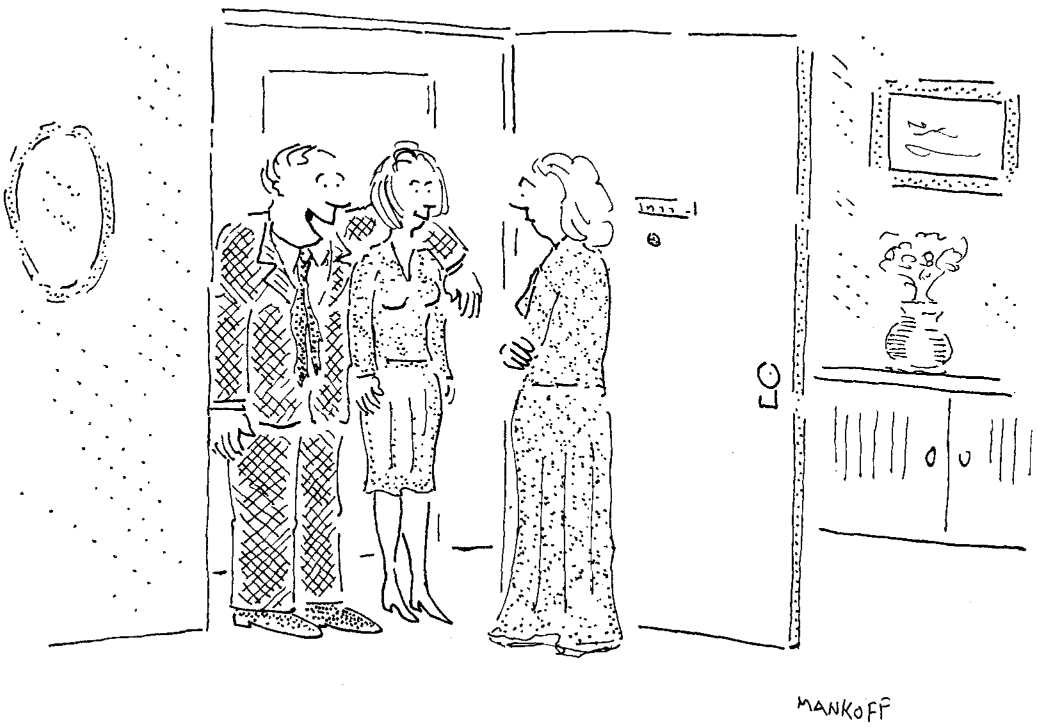
WHAT is currently going on is a face-off between Lloyd's and its seventeen thousand rebellious Names. The argument has run roughly like this. Lloyd's: Here's your bill. Names: Can't pay, won't pay. Lloyd's: You signed a legally binding contract to pay, so pay. Names: We're suing for negligent handling of our affairs. Lloyd's: Pay now, sue later. Names: No, sue now, pay later, and then only if the judgment goes against us. Lloyd's: If you don't pay now, Lloyd's might collapse. Names: Don't care. Lloyd's: If we collapse, the policyholders will have to be paid first, so you won't get any money; the only way you can benefit is if Lloyd's keeps going, so pay. Names: Well, we might pay in October. Lloyd's: But in September Lloyd's has to satisfy the solvency requirement of the Department of Trade and Industry if it wants to keep trading. Names: Tough. Lloyd's: You're bluffing. Names: No, you're bluffing.

One of those Names who would happily see Lloyd's go into meltdown is ex-Squadron Leader Francis, whose bill of nine hundred and seventy-two thousand pounds for the year 1990 took him comfortably over the two-million-pound mark. He left the Royal Air Force in 1967 with a fifteen-hundred-pound gratuity, used it to buy a small apartment, and within a decade had become a millionaire through dealing in property. Then he joined Lloyd's. The obvious question to ask is: Given that he was such a successful businessman, how come he didn't examine the deal he was being offered more closely? "Good point. The answer is: One's normal critical faculties were completely dulled." Now his coffee table is stacked with documents, press cuttings, and colored charts, while his phone overheats with Lime Street business. He seems not in the least ground down by it: a bronzed and energetic sixty-five-year-old, he reckons that "it's probably put ten years on my life, all this extra activity." Though now being forced by Lloyd's to sell his handsome terraced house near Holland Park, he is at least self-sufficient. "I'm entirely responsible for myself. No weeping wives in the corner, none of that. I've got no one I'm letting down by having perpetrated this. I'm pissed off about this house, quite frankly. But try being a Bosnian Muslim.”

Francis takes a reasonably philosophical view of his fate: “I have to admit, at the end of the day, who’s the fool who’s lost my money? Me.” But he is much less philosophical about the process by which the fool and his money were parted. In Francis’s analysis, there was a “tacit understanding among the top brass” about the potential losses from asbestosis claims. He doesn’t go so far as some, who theorize about active conspiracy, a mafia, or the nefarious influence of the three Masonic lodges that exist inside Lloyd’s: “I don’t believe they all climbed into their aprons and said, ‘Let’s shaft the Names.’ ” On the other hand, he asserts that “the first eleven” in Lloyd’s knew about the dangers by 1980. He points to a 1979 meeting in America between eleven Lloyd’s underwriters and Citibank, at which upcoming claims were mooted. (This is a key Chinese-whispers moment in recent Lloyd’s history. Several people I spoke to knew someone who knew someone who was present at this meeting, when a Citibank official allegedly said that Lloyd’s would have to get in ten thousand or fifty thousand or [fill in your number here up to two hundred and fifty thousand] “little men who can be broken” to pay for what was coming down the track; but the speaker has never been identified or traced.) Francis points out that during the period between 1980 and 1989 not a single chairman of Lloyd’s mentioned the word “asbestosis” in his annual report. “I spent twenty years in the R.A.F.,” he concludes. “You know, trust, honor—and then to find in such an august body a bunch of craven crooks.”

Francis, like all the burnt Names I talked to, has a few words of special dispraise for the Lloyd’s Hardship Committee, which exists, according to your point of view, either to protect Names from bankruptcy, draw a line under their liabilities, and make sure they can continue to live in modest comfort or else to see that every last Irish sixpence is wrung out of them before depositing them like dishrags on the shores of destitution. There is something peculiarly infuriating for a Name who has seen one department of Lloyd’s devastate his or her capital having to come to another department to have the financial last rites read, and to be awarded a pittance on which to live. There is also something grimly piquant about the Hardship Committee’s address: Gun Wharf, Chatham. This, after all, is the Medway town where Dickens had his first experience of impoverishment and its attendant shames. He was five when his father moved the family here, in 1817; John Dickens, already in severe financial difficulty, had been offered a job in the Chatham dockyard. But the family’s fortunes didn’t prosper: they moved to a cheaper house in 1822, and left the town later that year, selling all their furniture before departure (and, a year after that, John Dickens was imprisoned for debt in the Marshalsea). Dickens’ first work, “Sketches by Boz,” has a comic portrait of Mrs. Newnham, one of the family’s Chatham neighbors back in the eighteen-twenties: “Her name always heads the list of any benevolent subscriptions, and hers are always the most liberal donations to the Winter Coal and Soup Distribution Society. She subscribed twenty pounds towards the erection of an organ in our parish church, and was so overcome the first Sunday the children sang to it, that she was obliged to be carried out by the pew-opener.” Mrs. Newnham’s modern-day equivalent on the Chatham Winter Coal and Soup Distribution Society is Dr. Mary Archer, who chairs the Hardship Committee. She is also the wife of the airport novelist Jeffrey Archer, a preposterous and comic figure whom Thackeray would sketch better than Dickens, and who currently bustles around under the title Baron Archer of Weston-super-Mare. Lady Archer (“She prefers to be called Dr. Archer,” a voice at The Hardship advised) lists among her recreations in *Who’s Who* “picking up litter”—a pastime that Mrs. Thatcher once urged upon the nation in the course of a grotesque photo op—and perhaps there is an element of tidying the trash in Dr. Archer’s residency at Gun Wharf.

If Peter Middleton, the chief executive of Lloyd’s, is the one figure of whom the burnt Names uniformly speak well—praising his sympathy and his straightforwardness—then Dr. Archer is the one who catches the flak. Abuse, from casual to deeply considered, was all I heard from Names in the weeks before I met her: “Unctuous, holier-than-thou, and aren’t-we-doing-well?”; “That evil old bat” (this from a woman who was probably no younger); “Even a member of the Council said, ‘You could crack eggs on her.’ ” In part, this is normal rage at the figurehead of a money-squeezing department; in part, the sort of comment that high-achieving and good-looking women fre-



*“Diane, this is Karen, an old war buddy of mine.”*

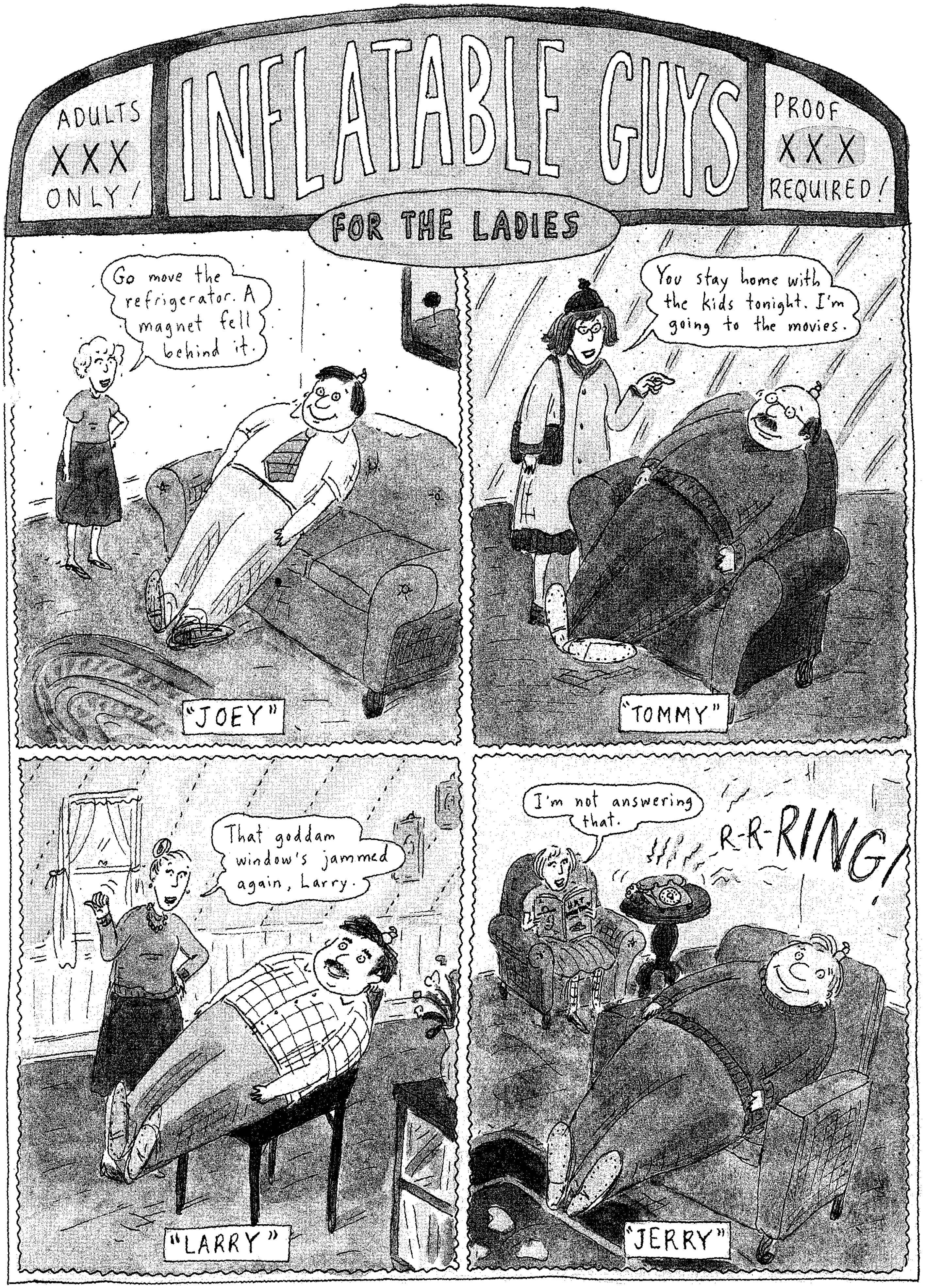
quently attract in British society. Lloyd's probably thought it a canny P.R. move to put Dr. Archer in charge of The Hardship: not just a woman (therefore assumed to be abundantly sympathetic), and a Name herself since 1977, but also the wife of a Name who earlier in his career had known spectacular debt; she could be billed, therefore, as someone who had herself taken the medicine she was now dishing out. However, there is something about Dr. Archer that gets up people's noses like a gigantic dose of snuff, and I have to admit that as I munched my sandwich lunch across a desk from her at Gun Wharf, while sunlit yachts cruised the Medway in the background, at least part of my mind was occupied with this issue. She is small, dark, pretty, poised, groomed, and very, very precise. She appears utterly in control (though a friend of mine once danced with her and claimed she was "a helpless child" in his arms). Perhaps it is the voice, which is pure bone china, or Cheltenham Ladies' College. When my plastic thimble of near-milk failed to turn my coffee much more than one shade away from ebony, she asked, attentively, "Would you like a second milk?" But it sounded, to my ears, more like "Are you sure that thumbscrew isn't uncomfortable?" However, the only moment when I got any true handle on the reaction she provokes was when I mentioned that there was a good deal of resentment out there among her current constituency. "Resentment, anger, distress," she replied. "All that is very understandable." But she listed the nouns as if identifying base metals rather than volcanic emotions.

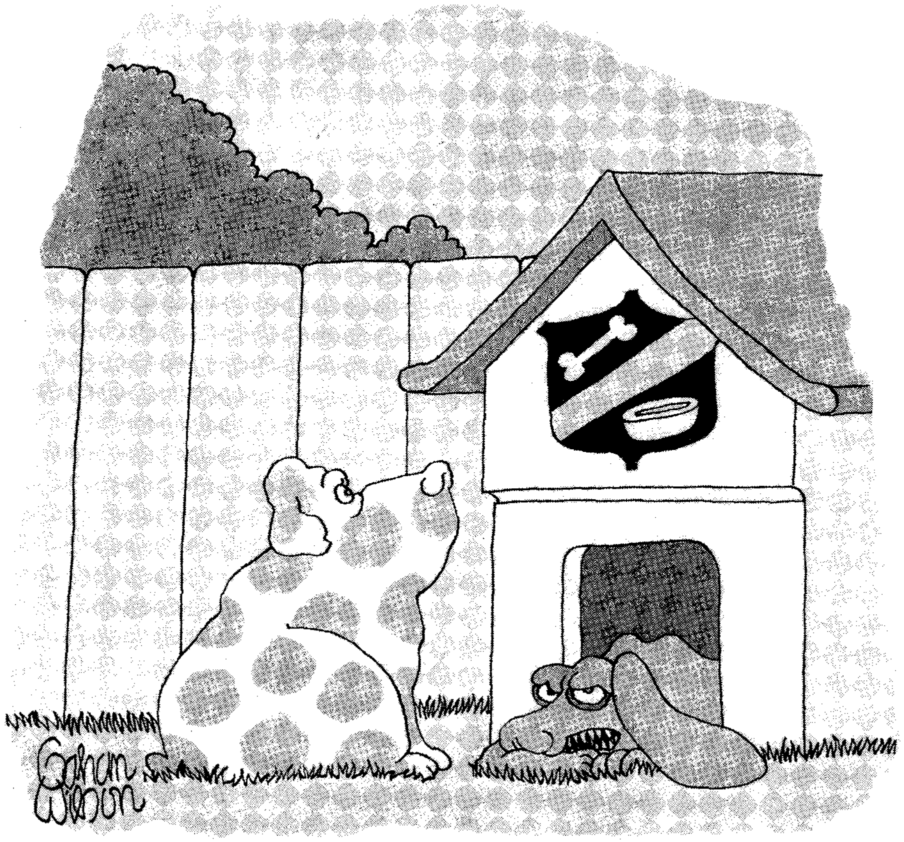
Her committee has a staff of twenty-eight (twenty case officers and eight administrators) and by August 3, 1993, had received two thousand three hundred and twenty-seven applications from Lloyd's Names. Of these, nine hundred and six had subsequently withdrawn their applications. This seems a remarkably high percentage. Two main factors explain it. First, a distaste for the process often sets in once its details are revealed (one sticking point is that a Name's spouse must also make a full financial declaration to Lloyd's). Second, going to The Hardship was initially seen as a very useful time-wasting exercise: once you had applied, your funds at Lloyd's were frozen and could not be drawn down. This led also to various picturesque excuses for tardiness, of the sort not needed since schooldays: one Name claimed that he had run over his toes with his lawnmower, which would obviously affect the form-filling phalanges at the other end of the body. The Hardship has since tightened its procedures, but, even so, progress is slow. Of the fourteen hundred and twenty-one cases currently active, three hundred and sixty-one have been examined and three hundred and twenty-eight Names have had a proposal made to them. Of these, a hundred and eight have accepted the settlement offered, though by August 3rd a mere seven cases had actually been signed and sealed.

"We are about avoiding bankruptcy and leaving the Name in an ongoing financial situation," Dr. Archer says. Plights vary (especially when there is spouse wealth), but what this effectively means in the case of a single person is that the Name will have to hand over to Lloyd's all his or her assets, assign any windfall money—inheritances, lucky days at the lottery—received over a three-year period, and sell anything other than "a modest and only home." This is roughly estimated as one worth between a hundred thousand and a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, depending on region. Lloyd's will take a charge on the Name's house, which will be claimed after death. The Name will be allowed, again if single, something between seven and twelve thousand pounds per year for the three-year period of the deal: anything earned above this figure is to be handed over. Finally, the settlement insists that Lloyd's can claim money from the Name after the three years are over, if it is Lloyd's-related money: profit from open years, profit from stop-loss policies, or money received after Lloyd's has been successfully sued. This last clause is especially unpalatable for some members: first, Lloyd's loses your pot of gold through incompetence, then you go bust, then the Hardship Committee goes through your pockets, then your court case wins you back some of the money *you shouldn't have lost to begin with,* whereupon The Hardship reappears and snatches that back off you, too. I told Dr. Archer that the newspaper photograph of her in a Nicole Manier frock was being satirically circulated among the burnt Names, and she responded, with a mid-November smile, "I don't blame them."

What happens, I asked her, if you smell a rat? "If we smell a rat, we sniff around." Business accounts might disclose complicated loans, or the Name might prove reluctant to let the committee talk to his bank. "But most of our Names are very straight," she insists. "They are mostly modest people in distressed circumstances. They say, 'Give me finality.' " A caseworker I talked to confirmed this: instances of attempted deceit seem rather minor and incompetent—a zero missing from an interest payment, or "putting down under expenses three television licenses on one property" (under British law you need only one license per property). Though the caseworker confirmed that "we still get a certain amount of bitterness creeping in, especially among the older Names who've lost their life savings," the process as described at Gun Wharf, is necessarily painful but comparatively untroubled: honorable Names seeking to have a line drawn under their troubles, trusting Lloyd's even in their financial extinction, sheep coming docilely to the final shearing. This may indeed be the case—so far. It may be that the committee has only seen the smaller fry, a likelihood endorsed by the fact that half the Names coming to The Hardship have a bank guarantee on their house (the rule-bending way of showing wealth in the eighties). It may well be that only those least tempted by dishonesty have come forward as yet, or that feelings of rage weaken and fiendish plans seem less plausible when faced with the bureaucracy of Gun Wharf. There did, even so, seem a huge disparity between the view from the banks of the Medway and the opinions I heard among the burnt.

BUT then the further you go into the Lloyd's story, the deeper the incompatibility of views you meet. Names coming honorably to settlement, or Names doing their utmost to get off the hook? A decade of high-level Masonic conspiracy against the external Names, or just a decade of lolloping incompetence? A linked series of individual tragedies blasting its way like H.I.V. through the upper-middle class, or merely a moral-free demonstration of "one lot of rich people stealing from another lot of rich people" (as a carbonized Name put it to me)? Assessing the true extent of the social and financial trauma is tricky. As you talk to Lloyd's Names and those close to them, you frequently hear of depression, marital breakdown, even suicide; of estates being sold, children taken out of


ADULTS XXX ONLY!
INFLATABLE GUYS
PROOF XXX REQUIRED!
FOR THE LADIES
Go move the refrigerator. A magnet fell behind it.
"JOEY"
You stay home with the kids tonight. I'm going to the movies.
"TOMMY"
That goddam window's jammed again, Larry.
"LARRY"
I'm not answering that.
R-R-RING!
"JERRY"



*"It's their idea of cute."*

school, and vertiginous downward mobility. Occasionally, the stories have a comic edge: I was told of one Name whose vivid taste for serial marriage was finally quenched when, anticipating possible losses, he put all his assets in his wife's name; now he lives in fretful dependence on a woman who would normally have passed her sell-by date. But mostly the tales are painful ones, often terminating in a statement like "an entire swath of English society has been wiped out." If Lloyd's melted down, and every member went bankrupt, such a statement would certainly be true: the membership still embroiled in one way or another is about thirty thousand, which happens to be roughly the number of entrants in the current edition of *Who's Who*. But we are far from this figure at the moment. It must seem like "an entire swath" to Lloyd's sufferers because Names tend to know other Names (that is, after all, how they became Names in the first place). "Wiped out" also has its gradations: sometimes a husband will have put his wife up as a member and stayed out of Lloyd's himself, thereby limiting the family's potential loss; while the "losses" are usually of those things—private education, second homes, skiing holidays—which seem to others gross and unwarranted social privileges in the first place. Finally, it's hard to quantify loss after you factor in stiff-upper-lipdom. One Name who had been obliged to sell part of his prized book collection sanguinely quoted to me the dictum "Don't cry over things that can't cry for you." And an underwriting agent told me of the following quintessential exchange he had overheard between two City gents as he was leaving his luncheon club. "How are you, old chap?" asked the first gent, to which the second, with a sad shake of the head, merely replied, "Lloyd's, I'm afraid."

The final incompatibility of view, and the final choice to be made, is this: Is Lloyd's, under a new management team, with a sparkling business plan and with Mr. Middleton's patrol cars seeing that the motorway speed limit is observed, getting itself lean and keen, keeping its overheads bloody low, and about to embark on a historic phase of regeneration in the mid-nineties, or is this all blarney and bluff, since the capital base has been disastrously eroded, Names are leaving not like sheep but like lemmings, corporate capital has much better things to do than rescue Lloyd's, and the whole boiling is going into meltdown very soon?

Truths normally lie in the middle, but one thing is certain. Lloyd's might survive the rage of its Names and the spate of legal actions; it might turn into a decent, well-regulated market; it might endure the losses still to come. What won't survive, what Lloyd's has lost forever, is a certain sort of Englishness on which it once prided itself, and which was coincidentally good for business. In the first place, it will have lost its money base in Arabella's-pony land, that world of second homes, private incomes, and private education: Peter Middleton anticipates that, if the business plan succeeds, within seven or eight years no more than fifteen per cent of the membership will be opting for unlimited liability—a fifteen per cent that will be "decreasingly English," with a fresh intake of buccaneering souls from the Pacific Basin. Beyond this, Lloyd's will have lost—has already lost—its peculiar, arcane, mystical, sexy status among that segment of British society it once did so well by; for want of a better word, it has lost its honor. It was the assumption of honor—beyond, or at least beside, such motives as snobbery, greed, and supposed canniness—that brought in the rush of new Names in the eighties; and in the dishonoring of Lloyd's they have lost their shirts. Of course, loss of honor may be no bad thing; see Falstaff. The irony is that those rendered insolvent by Lloyd's seem to feel this dishonoring more than those who caused it. The suicides are heavily on one side.

It's hardly a surprise that very few people are currently joining Lloyd's. The participating membership has fallen from 32,433 in 1988 to 19,681. From 1989 to 1992, 10,661 Names resigned and a mere 735 new members were elected. For all the received wisdom about going in at the bottom of a market, for all the statistics to prove that the best syndicates continued to make money through the worst years, these 735 must have nerve. Peter Middleton, among others, quoted to me the Lloyd's maxim "If you don't want any risk, go to the Post Office," but in late 1993 the Post Office looks a most attractive place. More than once, I heard the ultimate Doomsday scenario from the burnt Names. It goes like this. Leave aside the question of corporate capital, since, if it comes in, it will be largely protected from assuming earlier losses in the market. Names are going bust all over the place, the capital base has dwindled, many of this year's bills are unpaid, more losses are predicted for next year (and, if previous forecasts are a model, the reality will turn out to be grimmer): where is the money going to come from? If a member is bust four or five times over, even a visit to the Hardship Committee doesn't make the bills go away, so whom do they devolve onto? Onto the members who are still solvent. "We're all connected via the Central Fund," Clive Francis points out. So far, it has been a question of three annual one-and-a-half-per-cent levies on the amount every single member underwrites. ("You do rather grudge it," an Irish Name told me. His already painful cash call for the year 1990 had been augmented by six thousand pounds to help out the losers.) But, as more Names go under, the pressure on the remainder mounts. Here is the bottom line of the Doomsday scenario, as expressed by one professional Lloyd's-watcher: "I take the view that every Name at Lloyd's is bust—it's just that they don't know it."

One of those who don't know it—or, to put it another way, who are trading through the current difficulties—is one of the more unexpected Names among the Lloyd's Great and Good. Melvyn Bragg, novelist and TV arts presenter, is from the Cumbrian working class, the son of a publican who later kept a sweetshop. One of Bragg's first memories is of sitting in the fourth row of the Temperance Hall in Wigton and listening to his mother read the treasurer's report of the local Labour Party meeting. Throughout his high-profile TV career, he has been a loyal and equally high-profile member of the Labour Party. Indeed, at the time he went into Lloyd's—"about 1980"—he was also seriously tempted by a career in Parliament. Had this taken off, he would today have found himself the only Name on the Labour benches, opposite the forty-seven Tory Names. He admits that he "didn't think through" the potential conflict between membership in what is seen as one of the true bastions of the Tory upper-middle class and membership in what was then a comparatively left-wing Labour Party.

So why did he join? At the time, he had a house in Hampstead worth a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, a cottage in Cumbria, twenty thousand pounds in the bank, and "the income was beginning to build." He didn't fancy the stock market, and a financial adviser suggested Lloyd's. "It seemed a fair punt. That sort of thing suits my temperament and financial needs. I quite liked the gambling element." What was his response to the concept of unlimited liability? "I quite liked the punt. My father, on a small income, gambled all the time, though he never left my mother short." The odd thing is that, apart from Lloyd's, Bragg doesn't gamble at all. "I don't even have a bet on the Grand National. I always thought it was a mug's game, but—well, there you go." The few artsy Names there are in Lloyd's tend to be—like Baron Archer of Weston-super-Mare—as openly right-wing as Bragg is left. When I put the rarity of artsiness, leftiness, and Namedom to Bragg, he pauses and wonders, "Is John Mortimer a Name?" This is the same response I get whenever I put the question elsewhere: "Is John Mortimer a Name?" I ring the benign Rumpole-creator to check. "Certainly not," he replies, sounding slightly indignant at the suggestion. Why not? "I think it's a totally idiotic way of losing your money. I don't see how anyone goes in unless they're insane."

Bragg, though at times puzzled, seems untroubled by his membership. "I honestly think it's an honorable way to make your money work for you." But he could have put his money—while avoiding the stock market—into, say, a regular insurance company: was there an element of snobbery in his decision? "One hesitates not to claim vices," he replies, and we leave it at that. Bragg has also given his professional advice to Lloyd's. A year or so ago, he was informally consulted about the unhelpful publicity the market was getting. He was shocked to discover that

*"Here we are again, back in our little town, flush with exotic tales from the potato fields."*

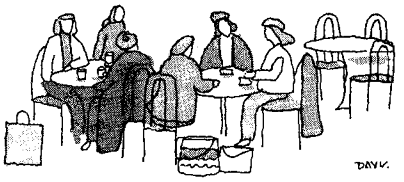
"they had a press office as big as Border Television's"—i.e., roughly one man, a boy, and a grouse. This side of things is now handled in a more assured and glossy way, as part of the "transparent society" Lloyd's now claims itself to be.

The novelist admits that at the time he was "appallingly lackadaisical" about the consequences of joining Lloyd's. But he was also fortunate in the advice he received. The easily made comparison between Namedom and gambling on the horses has some validity, though not in one basic respect: if you walk off the street into a bookmaker's, you are likely to get more or less the same odds from any firm; if you walk off the street into Lloyd's, the first and probably the biggest gamble you take lies in which agent you are introduced to. Bragg followed "very, very lightly" the syndicates he was put on; he never took out stop-loss insurance ("When I worked out the figures, it wasn't worth it"); and, though he's lost money in the last couple of years, "I think I'm quite a bit ahead in a crude sense." He is currently on twenty-eight syndicates, he says, four losing and twenty-four doing "very well." Do the losses of the last years make him think about getting out? "The equation is insane," he replies. By which he means that resignation does not exempt you from future losses on the syndicates left open; so in effect you would only be resigning from your winning syndicates. Leaving doesn't cross his mind. "I think Lloyd's is a better bet now. If I could get off the open syndicates, I'd pour it in now. There's masses of syndicates making money. It's a good time to join."

Both the English novelist and an Irish businessman I'd talked to took the same line. If they'd known at the time of joining what was to happen, they would never have gone in ("The sort of punter I was in 1980 wouldn't touch it with a barge pole now," says Bragg); on the other hand, given that they are in, and have survived the losses of the last three years, they think it's a fine time to stay in. The comparison with gambling seems truest when you get down to gut psychological response. If you've lost and been burnt, you know it's a mug's game—that the horses are nobbled, the jockeys bribed, and the stewards corrupt. If you've won, or broken even, you feel yourself a squire of the turf next to the poor saps who've lost their cufflinks—you're the one who gets hot tips from the stables, who can sniff a dodgy fetlock at a hundred paces, who knows a chap who knows a chap.

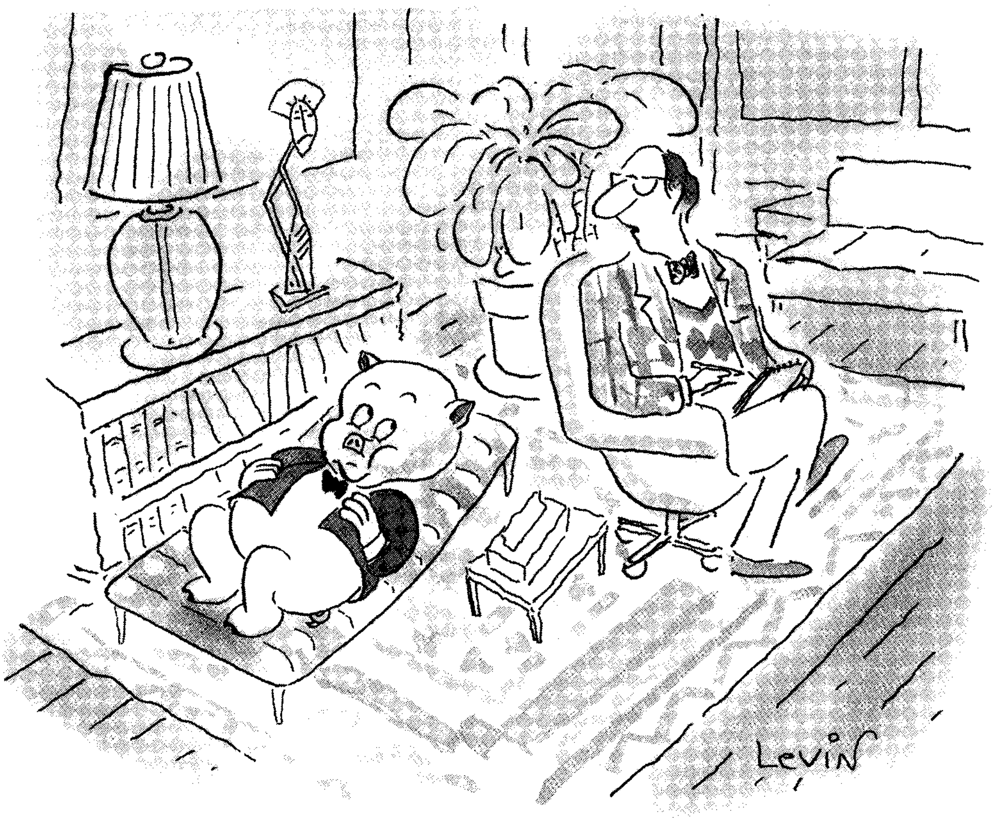
The chap whom Melvyn Bragg knows is the Lloyd's joint deputy chairman Robert Hiscox, who is also his agent. As the son of a former chairman, Hiscox is very much a Lloyd's insider; he has been a working Name since 1967, spent twenty years "on the box," insuring art at the high end of the market, and is currently the chairman of the underwriting agents Roberts & Hiscox. A dapper fifty-year-old, whose words are quiet in tone yet combative in content, he has been arguing in favor of limited liability for twenty-five years. This was always resisted, partly because of a general misreading of the Lloyd's Acts, of 1871 and later, which seemed to forbid it (in fact, they did so only for individuals), but mainly on the ground of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." "To which I used to reply, 'Most things cannot be fixed once they're broken.' " Now he is in charge of raising corporate capital and saving Lloyd's neck: the biggest fixing job there is.

Hiscox is a plainspoken man and a market realist. He was also the author, a dozen years ago, of that notorious phrase "If God had not meant them to be sheared, He would not have made them sheep." Faced with that quotation in a TV interview in June of this year, by which time quite a number of sheep had been not just sheared but also butchered and scoffed with mint sauce and all the trimmings, Hiscox correctly pointed out that the true author of the line was Eli Wallach in his favorite film, "The Magnificent Seven." But, still, what did he mean by it? "There are people," he replied, "who unerringly choose the wrong accountant in life, they choose the wrong wife or husband, they choose the wrong solicitor, they choose the wrong stockbroker, and they have unerring bad judgment, and, unfortunately, if one's trying to regulate a market so that these people cannot lose money the trouble comes when they meet the wrong Lloyd's underwriting agent, and it has been a very bad experience for them." This sounds pretty much like blaming the victims (in any case, shouldn't one be quoting Yul Brynner rather than Eli Wallach?); and when our conversation turns to "all this grief and misery" of the last few years Hiscox observes that the events of the eighties were always liable to happen "if you have very undemanding capital." This seems a strange and most chilling way to describe the people I'd been talking to over the last weeks. Besides, wasn't that what he, as an agent, wanted? He disagreed: "We turned them"—such applicants—"away in droves. So they ran out of this door and into Gooda Walker, unfortunately, and they didn't go into it with great depth. They trusted a three-hundred-and-five-year-old institution, part of Britain and the Empire, and they didn't really look into it."



The new business that Lloyd's is seeking to attract is unlikely to have many ovine characteristics, and will certainly "look into" things. When I asked Peter Middleton why corporate capital should be attracted to a market that had so dramatically favored the insider in recent years, he pointed out that such institutions are perfectly capable of identifying the syndicates they want to be put on (and will presumably use their muscle to get there). The market will begin accepting corporate Names in January, 1994. They will need a capital of one million five hundred thousand pounds and will have to deposit fifty per cent of the amount they underwrite with Lloyd's (as opposed to thirty per cent for individual Names); their liability will be limited; and previous Lloyd's losses will be "ring-fenced." This last aspect has attracted criticism from current Names who see themselves as bearing the burden of earlier Lloyd's failings while corporate capital waltzes in and enjoys all the juicy new business. Hiscox forcefully argues the market necessity of this two-tier system: "You won't get a new investor coming in and paying a penny for the past." Besides, he says, in this respect Lloyd's is no different from the stock market: if a share price falls to a low level, an investor buying it at, say, twenty-four pence would not—and would not expect to—help out those who had earlier bought the stock at a hundred and twenty-four pence.

Hiscox admits that the revolt of the shires has given the action groups a certain whammy over Lloyd's for the moment. Time is not on his side when it comes to attracting corporate capital, and the sight of a mass revolt by previous investors, not to mention the referral of one case to the Serious Fraud Office for pos-



*"Something you have to accept, Porky. You may always be 'Looney Tunes.' "*

• •

sible criminal prosecution, constitutes bad P.R. What if Lloyd's Names refuse to pay? What if no corporate money comes forward? "With no corporate capital, we can survive into 1994." He finds it ironic that, having seen off various enemies in the past, and having even got the Labour Party on its side in some recent bits of House of Commons business, the market is now "fighting our own Names." But then, he wryly observes, "England can only perish but by Englishmen." This strikes me as peculiarly rich and cheeky, since Lloyd's has for many a long century lived off being English to the core. I remember the Deficit Millionairess saying, "I thought it was a very English thing to do." I also remember the West Country Widow's sharp observation when I mentioned the advent of corporate capital: "I wouldn't invest in a company that invested in Lloyd's."

If the new business plan works, and Lloyd's survives, the market will substantially change its nature. The days of dinner-party trawling, the Wimbledon connection, the amateur investor—the days of sheep and "undemanding capital"—will go. The individual Name will be a rarity; most Names will band together to achieve some corporate status and operate with limited liability, or else they will invest through a larger institution. Of course, the money would come from some of the same people as before, though this time it would be filtered through pension-fund managers rather than arriving like a bag of silver fish forks in the back of a Range Rover. When I ask what Lloyd's—assuming it survives—will be like in ten years' time, Hiscox looks misty, if it is possible to look dynamically misty. "My dream is of it as it was at its peak, a pocket of excellence, creating and innovating." When was that peak? Surprisingly, "about 1790." Hiscox then talks of "three fundamental things Lloyd's hasn't had for twenty years." These are: "One, a rich, sophisticated capital. Two, total integrity. Three, strong government." At which point, Hiscox makes another cinematic reference: not Eli Wallach this time but Tyrone Power. In 1936, in one of his lesser-known roles, Power played the part of an underwriter in Darryl F. Zanuck's "Lloyd's of London." The time is around 1790, the "three fundamental things" hold sway at Lloyd's, and the underwriting hero, according to Hiscox, is a man of "total integrity, doing his thing for his country." Hiscox kindly lent me a tape of the film.

"Lloyd's of London" is a thoroughly jolly piece of tosh, and if you believe that Freddie Bartholomew can grow up into Tyrone Power you will happily believe the rest of it as well. Young Freddie is a childhood friend of a rather posher boy called Horatio Nelson, until destiny separates their paths. Nelson goes into the Navy, and Freddie runs away to London, where he is adopted by the famous Coffee House. He is reminded at the knee of John Julius Angerstein, a famous underwriting baron of the time, that "Lloyd's is founded on two great pillars: news and honest dealing. If either fails, we fail, and with us the whole of the British merchant marine." Freddie grows suddenly into Tyrone and falls in love with Madeleine Carroll. The Napoleonic Wars break out. Business is written. The Lutine Bell is rung (anachronistically). Tyrone quotes back to Angerstein his own dictum that "Lloyd's is not a collection of moneygrubbing brokers but an organization linked with the destiny of England." Poor Nelson is largely an offstage figure; it is the underwriter who is the visible man of action. Tyrone audaciously continues to insure the British merchant fleet at prewar rates, even though it lacks the protection of the British Navy. The Lutine Bell is rung again. Near the end, Tyrone's lovelorn girl-pal, who has lost out to Madeleine Carroll, tells him, in swooning congratulation, "Nelson's won, England's saved, and Lloyd's is saved."

Interesting, and proleptic, and perhaps judiciously forgotten in Mr. Hiscox's description of the underwriter as a man of "total integrity," is the route by which our hero saves England, Nelson, Lloyd's, his underwriting capacity, and his love for Madeleine Carroll (and *her* money, too, for that matter, since she has, sheeplike, delivered her inheritance into his arms). He does it by perpetrating a gross deception on Lloyd's, on his investors and his friends, on the British Admiralty and the British nation, and by repeating and defending that lie for several days, until his old pal Horatio wins the Battle of Trafalgar. For this deceit (and other complicated reasons), he is shot in the back by George Sanders at exactly the same moment as Nelson is being shot by the French at Trafalgar. The national hero dies; the underwriter survives. Perhaps there is some lesson here, for England and for the burnt Names of Lloyd's. ♦

PROFILE

# MR. AND MRS. WILLIAMS

*Who is Marsha Garces Williams? For now she is known as the wife and business partner of the actor Robin Williams. But once she finishes co-producing "Mrs. Doubtfire," with her husband in the title role, she will be a unique voice in the Hollywood of the nineties.*

BY LILLIAN ROSS

WHEN people in, or interested in, the movie business are asked casually to identify some women in the United States today who are producers, one usually hears the same names: Sherry Lansing ("Indecent Proposal"), Debra Hill ("The Fisher King"), Linda Obst ("Sleepless in Seattle"), Dawn Steel ("Sister Act"), Lauren Shuler-Donner ("Free Willy"), Gale Ann Hurd ("The Terminator"), Midge Sanford and Sarah Pillsbury ("Desperately Seeking Susan"), Lili Fini Zanuck ("Driving Miss Daisy"), and Kathleen Kennedy ("Jurassic Park"). One hears that Goldie Hawn and Bette Midler and Barbra Streisand "also produce," and then, irrelevantly, "but they're actresses, they're stars." Now the name of Marsha Garces Williams is on the list. She is a different kind of producer, and she is reinventing the job for 1993. Mrs. Williams and her husband, Robin, have founded and are running their own film company, Blue Wolf Productions, with Mrs. Williams as the president. In San Francisco, where they live, they have made their first film, "Mrs. Doubtfire," with Sally Field, Pierce Brosnan, Harvey Fierstein, Robert Prosky, and, as Mrs. Doubtfire, Robin Williams. The production, under the watch of Twentieth Century Fox, is scheduled for release sometime in December.

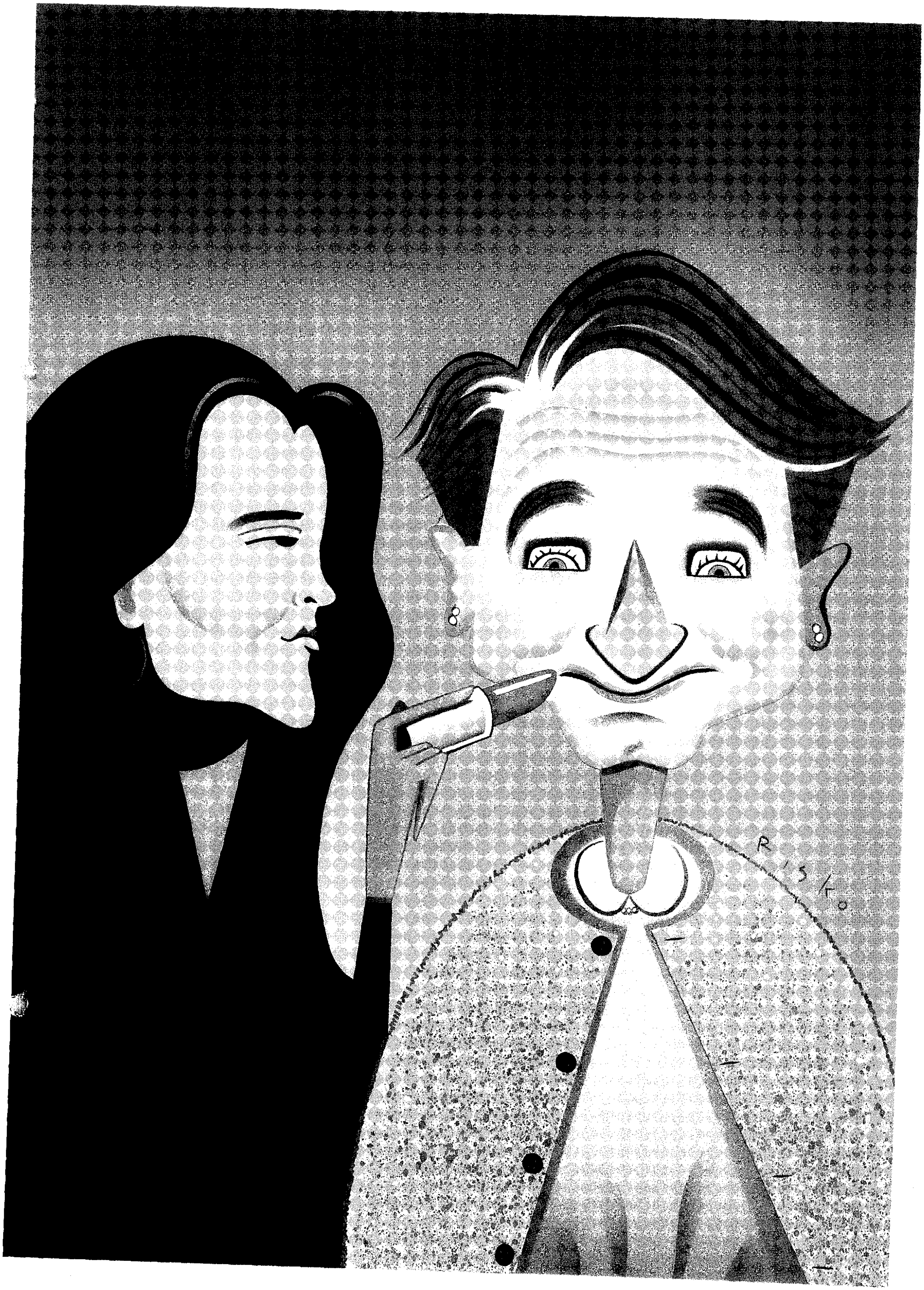
It seems to be a practice in the movie business to have a variety of producers listed in the credits. For "Mrs. Doubtfire," the credits will read, "Produced by Marsha Garces Williams, Robin Williams and Mark Radcliffe; Executive Producer, Matthew Rushton; Co-Producer/Unit Production Manager, Joan Bradshaw." The practice of multiple producer crediting may raise questions of redundancy in the minds of people sitting in the dark multiplex theatre waiting impatiently for the movie to get going. But there is absolute clarity in the minds of the other producers and the staff of "Mrs. Doubtfire" that the leader of the enterprise is Mrs. Williams.

It started with the acquisition of Anne Fine's "Madame Doubtfire"—a children's book published in Great Britain in 1987—by Matthew Rushton and the late Frank Levy, who were the makers of, among other things, "My Stepmother Is an Alien." They submitted the book to Elizabeth Gabler, who was then vice-president of production at United Artists and is now senior vice-president of production at Twentieth Century Fox. Kirk Kerkorian, who controlled both United Artists and M-G-M in the late eighties, merged the former company into the latter, leaving people associated with U.A. unhappy. "My former boss at United Artists, Roger Birnbaum, believed in this movie and loved it, as did I," Mrs. Gabler says. "It was always Robin Williams in our minds and hearts for this movie. But U.A. put the property into turnaround. Then Roger Birnbaum went to Fox to become president of worldwide production, and he got Fox to write a check acquiring all rights to the book."

Elizabeth Gabler joined Birnbaum at Fox a month later. Together they assigned a writer, Randi Mayem Singer, to do a screenplay based on the book. Marsha Williams, who had read the book about four years earlier and had liked it, happened to be in the office of her husband's managers on the Fox lot early last year and mentioned her interest in the book. By coincidence, the Singer script had just arrived in the office. Mrs. Williams read the script and had reservations about it. "It was too broad and did not tell the story I felt it should tell," she explained to me last March in San Francisco, during the preproduction period of the movie. Fox asked Mrs. Williams if she and her husband were interested in producing it. Mrs. Williams said yes and proceeded to work with Singer on rewriting the screenplay. Then Fox informed Mrs. Williams that Chris Columbus ("Home Alone," "Home Alone II: Lost in New York") was available to direct the movie. Mr. and Mrs. Williams said they'd like to have Columbus rewrite the script, which he did. Mrs. Williams told Fox that Columbus had done a "brilliant" job and that Mr. Williams would now commit, in the parlance, to act in the movie. Joe Roth, the chairman of Fox, committed; he telephoned Mrs. Williams and said, "You've got a 'go' movie." Robin and Marsha Williams committed to producing the film. As for Elizabeth Gabler, she says, "I was proud to be associated with 'Mrs. Doubtfire.' Even more so now that Marsha and Robin were involved."

In "Mrs. Doubtfire," Robin Williams plays the part of Daniel Hillard, described in the script as "a good-looking, rumpled fellow in his mid-thirties," who keeps getting fired from small-time television-acting jobs. His wife, Miranda, played by Sally Field, divorces him and is awarded custody of their three children. In order to be with his kids, Daniel gets himself professionally disguised, with mask, wig, false bosom, false behind, spectacles, and dress, and, calling himself Mrs. Doubtfire, goes to work as Miranda's housekeeper. As Mrs. Doubtfire, Robin Williams is astonishing: his voice, his English accent and inflections, his walk, his gestures, his eyes, and his impromptu responses, bodily and verbal, are utterly convincing. He put on the costume and makeup for the first time last March, before the filming began. I was in the "Mrs. Doubtfire" production office on a Saturday afternoon when someone new walked in—a heavyset gray-haired woman wearing spectacles, a pleated plaid skirt, a white blouse with a Peter Pan collar pinned with a brooch, a wool cardigan sweater, stockings, and cornily sensible Oxfords. Graciously,

ROBERT RISKO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and somewhat shyly, she wished me good afternoon in a charming, soft English accent. I had been expecting her to show up, but it took me some time to realize who she was. It was almost immediately apparent that Mr. Williams, the actor, was becoming enamored of her. In the nearly four months of filming that followed, his affection for her never let up, and it created a groundswell of positive feeling for the lady on the part of the entire movie crew. Mr. Williams would speak about her as though she had sprung full-blown to her place in front of the camera, without any help from him. "What a sweet lady, with that gentle, lovely quality," he said to me, in her accent, weeks after he had finished playing her.

Also astonishing are his sudden transformations from one character to the other. There is a scene, for example, in which Mrs. Sellner, the social worker, comes to the divorced and displaced Daniel's seedy, messy apartment to check up on his habits. It calls for Mrs. Doubtfire to greet her and to explain that she is Daniel's visiting "sister." In this scene, Williams must run back and forth between the living room and the bedroom, put on his latex mask, his bodysuit with the big bosom and big behind, and his stockings and tight shoes while simultaneously calling out to Mrs. Sellner, alternately, in Daniel's voice and in Mrs. Doubtfire's. I watched Williams, wringing with sweat in his bodysuit, do sixteen takes just on the single master shot, and I stopped counting when he had to do the closeups, the reverse angles, and the rest.

Williams is funny as Daniel and as Mrs. Doubtfire, and, miraculously, as both he is able to switch quickly from being very funny to being very poignant. As Daniel, he manages to make believable, without sinking into sentimentality, the pathos of a parent who is forcibly separated from his children. In a scene that takes place in a courtroom, for example, Daniel pleads with the judge to alter the decision that has awarded custody of his children to their mother, with his visitation rights limited to a few hours a week. With the cameras on him, and the lights, and the grips and the soundmen and the visitors to the set and all the supposedly disturbing paraphernalia crowding in on him, Williams seemed to me to be reaching a higher level of acting than I'd ever seen him reach before. In various recent pictures, he had played the parts of a surreal innocent ("Toys," 1992), a Spielbergian modification of Peter Pan ("Hook," 1991), a gentle academic driven into hallucinations and nightmares by his wife's sudden death ("The Fisher King," 1991), an idealistic, shy research doctor finding a way to bring to life comatose patients ("Awakenings," 1990), and a devoted English teacher at a boys' prep school trying to imbue his students with his own love of literature ("Dead Poets Society," 1989). Now, in this scene, he was trying to convey the feelings of a distraught and frightened father who, deprived of satisfaction in his work, is confronted with the terrifying possibility of being deprived of the daily, all-encompassing joy of seeing his children. After the "Cut!" was heard, people on the set, including me, were sobbing.

Mrs. Williams' mettle as producer was tested early on when she and Mr. Williams and Chris Columbus were urged to change the film's ending. "Everybody—our managers, our agents, people at the studio—said that the audience would want Daniel and Miranda to get back together, or, at least, to leave their situation up in the air," she said. She paused for a beat, then added quickly and with startling passion, "When two people are harmful and wrong for each other, they do not belong together."

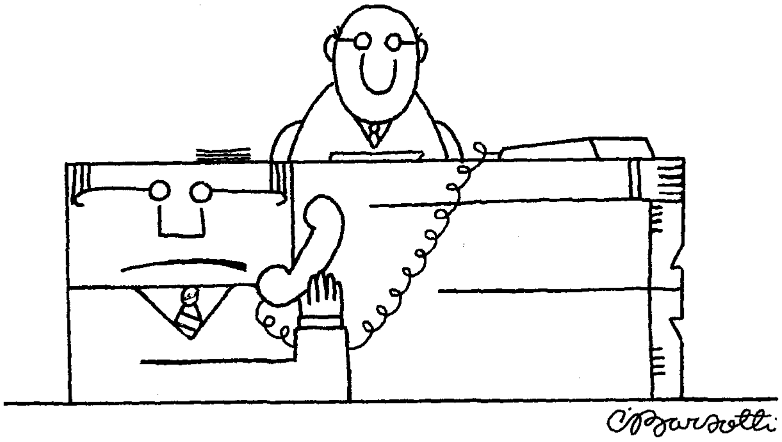
"The Norman Rockwell family doesn't exist," Mr. Williams said, even more strongly. "It's a myth." And Chris Columbus elaborated: "Ninety per cent of parents who separate don't get back together again. We don't want our audience to see a dishonest film. We didn't set out to make 'The Parent Trap.' We're going to protect 'Mrs. Doubtfire.' We're keeping it honest."

Matthew Rushton, a very likable and very agreeable fellow, who turned up on the San Francisco set from Los Angeles sporadically, told me that he, too, preferred the "honest" ending. Then, with a shrug, he said, "I'm surprised that Fox has been so coöperative about the ending." With another shrug, he added, "I don't know what the studio executives might do if the first test screening produces a negative reaction."

"Marketing executives want to test everything these days," Mr. Williams said. "Now they're in the theatres testing the *trailers*. Pretty soon, they'll test a letter before sending it. Tests tend to frighten people off from doing what they need to do."

"Test screenings don't matter," Columbus said. "We just won't change it. Marsha and I are not going to bend."

The theme of family and the meaning and feeling of family are locked into the fabric of this movie. "We want to show that a family forms in any number of combinations, and that, as long as there is love, there is a family," Columbus said. In a sort of counterpoint to the tribulations of the fictional Hillard family, the makers of the movie had their own families—mothers, fathers, small children, big children, grandparents, babies, and dogs—on the set, at the meal breaks, and in the screening rooms for the "dailies," the shots taken on the previous day. During meal breaks, or while waiting for the start of a take, Chris Columbus would be seen holding his year-old son, Brendan, in his arms. With the mysteriously accurate perception of infants, one-and-a-half-year-old Cody Williams would respond to Mrs. Doubtfire's accent and greet his



*"I can't talk now."*

father with a loud "Da-da" of recognition. Even the exhausted-looking Joan Bradshaw, whose co-producing credits range from "Going in Style" and "Indiana Jones & the Last Crusade" to "One Good Cop" and "Death Becomes Her," and who on "Mrs. Doubtfire" is both co-producer and unit production manager (either one being a highly demanding and nerve-racking job), and who had developed and finely honed the knack of avoiding eye contact with anybody who might lay a last straw on her, was seen on the set cuddling and comforting a newborn baby, sibling of the youngest child actor in the film. Columbus sometimes recruited visiting family members and friends and put them—including Cody; his then three-and-a-half-year-old sister, Zelda; their ten-year-old half brother, Zachary; and Mrs. Williams' mother—in bit parts of a few seconds.

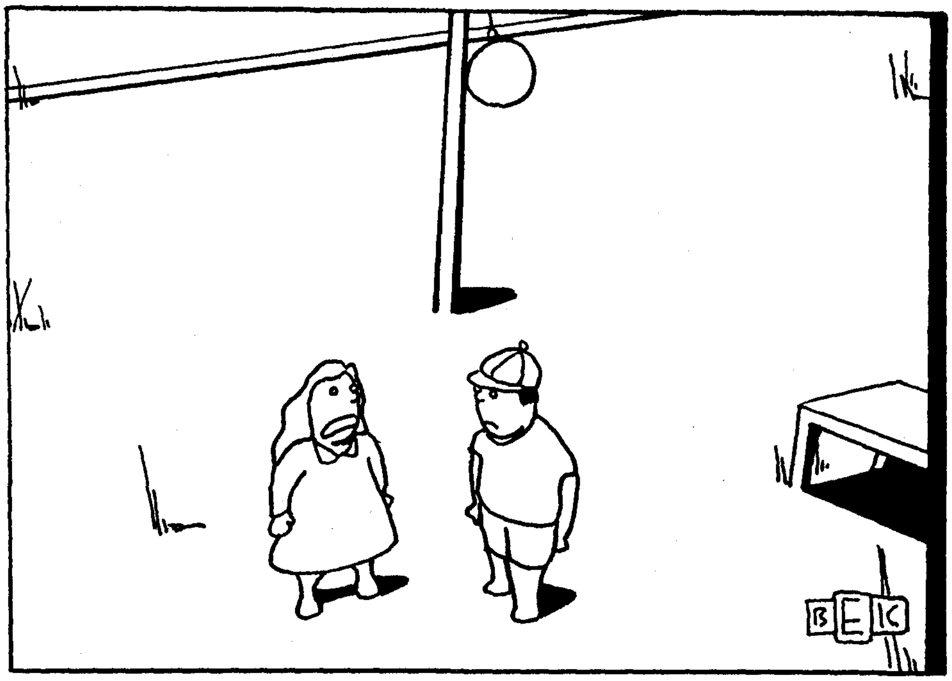
One of the first lessons a neophyte on a movie-production site learns is the supreme importance of remembering names (the more important the name, the more important the remembering) and then quickly addressing each person by his or her first name and looking and sounding extremely enthusiastic and cheerful while doing so. Even the caterers engaged for the movie seemed to know this rule. Last spring, during the first week of shooting, I was amazed when I heard my own first name uttered in greeting by one of the children hanging around the set. Another basic precept seems to be: Talk fast—very, very, *very* fast. No matter what anybody is talking about, in this most competitive of competitive industries, almost everybody speaks to everybody else in a shared rhythm that escalates in speed as it goes on. The participants sound as though they were engaged in a contest to see who can put out the most verbiage in the shortest time, like radio broadcasters trained to squeeze in more and more syllables between commercials. The children around the "Mrs. Doubtfire" set seemed to be absorbing the time-is-money-in-this-business pace quite naturally, and their baby talk weirdly repeated the rhythms of their elders. Other rituals were followed impressively by even the youngest of the children. One evening, I noticed three-and-a-half-year-old Eleanor Columbus in respectful attendance at the "dailies." The child sat watching for almost an hour in concentrated, silent attention. When the lights went on, I asked her who had taught her that one must not talk or make any noise at the screenings. She pointed to Porscha and Brittany Radcliffe, eleven- and nine-year-old daughters of the Williamses' producing associate, and said, "*They* did."

MRS. WILLIAMS is in her thirties, and has dark-brown hair worn long and free (or, occasionally, in a ponytail or braid), enormous dark eyes, delicate features, and a dazzling smile. She speaks softly and patiently.

If looks stem, as is said, from parents, Mrs. Williams' may be attributed to her father, Leon Garces, a chef, who was born in Cebu, the oldest city in the Philippines, and finished two years of medical school at the University of the Philippines before coming to the United States; and to her mother, Ina, the youngest of seven children of Finnish immigrants who wound up on a farm in Owen, Wisconsin, two hundred miles northwest of Milwaukee. "I'd walk a couple of miles in temperatures reaching forty below zero to get to a one-room grade school," Ina Garces told me at a big family-plus-friends Easter party. "We had to fight to go to high school. But our farm was a nice place to grow up. We worked very hard and always had food on the table," she said. Marsha was born in Milwaukee, the youngest of four children: Victor, the eldest, died a couple of years ago; Selina, the wife of a lawyer, lives in Tucson; and Carmen, whose husband is in sports medicine, lives in Phoenix, not far from her parents. Marsha told me that, unlike her sisters and her brother, she was a loner. "I grew up in a German community, where all the other kids were blond, and we were dark, so I know what it feels like to be what is considered different," she said, and added, matter-of-factly, "I was different even from my brother and sisters. They were very social. I was always by myself." She taught herself to read at the age of four by studying the label on a shampoo bottle. By nine, she was reading Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings." She was a voracious reader throughout her childhood, reading at the table or under the table at meals, and reading in a closet when she was supposed to be asleep. She is still a reader.

"I always have a mountain of reading material by my bed," she said. (Some of the books by her bed: "Immortality," by Milan Kundera; "A Personal Anthology," by Jorge Luis Borges; "The Encyclopedia of Sexual Trivia," by Robin Smith; "Drawing with Children," by Mona Brookes; "Tales of Mystery and Imagination," by Edgar Allan Poe; "The Solar Electric House—A Design Manual for Home-Scale Photovoltaic Power Systems," by Steven J. Strong.) She wanted to study art and took art classes while working nights as a waitress. She worked as a bank supervisor but returned to working as a waitress, because she liked the job. "I learned that I had an instinct for making people feel comfortable," she explained. To pursue her interest in art, she took art classes at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Then she headed West, where she continued taking art classes, at San Francisco State College, and working as a waitress at night. "I just didn't want to be in Milwaukee anymore," she said.

Marsha met Robin at a party in San Francisco about twelve years ago. Her marriage to him is her third. "My parents were very good about letting me make my own mistakes," she said, with one of her quick smiles. In 1984, she took a job caring for Zachary, Williams' then year-old son by his first wife, Valerie Velardi. "I'm proud of how well I cared for him," she said. "I loved Zak then, and I love him now." Marsha stayed in the job for about a year, and throughout that time she was involved in a serious relationship with another man—a relationship that continued after she left the job. That period was a tempestuous and troubled one for Robin in his marriage. He, too, was involved with another person. He had experienced great success as the star of the "Mork & Mindy" TV show during its four-year run (1978-82), and he had gone on to act in movies, starting with "Popeye," directed by Robert Altman, which was not a financial success. Discord continued in his marriage to Valerie. In early 1986, Robin and Valerie separated. Marsha, who was still involved with another man, went to work for Robin as his assistant, organizing and arranging his tours, taking care of his fan mail, and so on. Among other things, Robin was then giving a good deal of attention to efforts to help the homeless, by holding "Comic Relief" benefits. He also started



*"A day is a long time."*

paying attention again to his health and fitness, and returned to one of his favorite disciplines, running.

After Robin and Valerie had been living apart for about a year, Robin and Marsha became involved with each other. Marsha continued working as Robin's assistant, and when he went to Thailand to film "Good Morning, Vietnam" she went with him. With the movie's release, in December of 1987, Robin Williams became a highly visible celebrity, and he and Marsha, who was now regularly by his side, became the targets of a certain amount of highly visible, cavalier tabloid attention. "The crazy, sleazy stuff they printed!" one of the Williamses' friends remarked to me recently. "Marsha is an original and exceptional woman, a real match for Robin."

It took almost three years for the divorce terms to be settled. On April 30, 1989, at Lake Tahoe, Robin and Marsha got married, with about thirty friends in attendance, including Mr. and Mrs. Billy Crystal, Mr. and Mrs. Barry Levinson, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Johnson, and Mr. and Mrs. Bob Goldthwait. Valerie Velardi, busy with a life of her own, had another baby about a year ago, by which time she and Robin and Marsha had worked out an equal time-sharing plan that Zachary and everybody related to him are comfortable with.

Robin has two half brothers: Todd Williams, who lives in Santa Rosa, is a regional distributor for a wine company, and McLauren Smith, who lives in Memphis, Tennessee, is a high-school physics teacher. Robin's father, who was an automobile-company vice-president, died a few years ago. His mother, Laurie Williams, a spirited, chicly dressed, tennis-playing, joke-telling, fun-hungry woman, lives in Tiburon, outside San Francisco, and regularly spends Sundays with Robin and Marsha and their children. She always seems to be looking for a laugh. Laughing to me, she recited one of the earliest rhymes she had taught Robin:

> Sammy was a spider
> Bright in every way
> Except he didn't like to spin,
> He liked to crochet.

"I say to Robin, 'I feel your mission on earth is to bring joy to the world,'" she told me.

TAKING a look at some of what Marsha Williams has done as a producer involved a kind of mind-boggling course in micromanagement. "Actually, what I'm doing is, to a great extent, what I've been doing with Robin for several years," she said. "I've been reading scripts for him, looking into possible projects, and giving him my opinions about all of it when he asks me. He doesn't always agree with me, and there have been movies that he embarked on without paying any attention to what I thought, but I've supported him in whatever decisions he's made."

"She waded right into it," Robin Williams said to me with a kind of calm amazement. "She likes the challenge of producing. My name is on 'Mrs. Doubtfire' as producer, and we talk to each other about everything, but she does most of the work, and all that talking with other people. She has the patience to discuss a problem for hours and hours. I have to be busy preparing for my part. Anyway, I tend to be direct. I'll just say 'That sucks!'"

According to Mr. Williams, Mrs. Williams learned the ways of a producer by watching some of his past producers—"the ones who know how to get the job done the good way, people like Steve Haft, who produced 'Dead Poets Society,' and Mark Johnson, who produced 'Good Morning, Vietnam.' Everybody picks up on the way Marsha deals with them—decently, humanely, treating people the way she has wanted to be treated."

Mrs. Williams and her staff attended the preproduction money meetings with the people from Fox. Once the budget was set, she was doing everything: scouting locations with her director, cinematographer, and crew; deciding that the canvas folding chairs for the deserving participants would have the names in white script on black canvas; O.K.'ing a huge Chromatrans by Pacific Studios showing the street and the San Francisco skyline, which would serve as a view from the window of Daniel's apartment; telephoning Pierce Brosnan at his Los Angeles home to welcome him to the cast; and diplomatically but forcefully instructing the Fox product-placement people that placement of name-brand-labelled products was strictly forbidden with or near Robin Williams in the movie, no matter how much money for Fox was at stake, and pointing out that "Robin has been offered a lot of money to make commercials and we've turned them all down."

She was on her cellular telephone constantly, even while driving. She preferred to drive herself, often in her electric car. It is a smallish white station wagon, called an Electron One, a modified Ford Escort. It is supposed to go forty miles on one charge, but on the city's hills it gets risky after twenty-five. Whenever she could, upon arriving at her destination she would find an open window and plug in the car with a cord through the window.

While taking care of "Mrs. Doubtfire," she showed no letup in her attention to Blue Wolf Productions, her business responsibilities, or her care of her husband and their children, along with a myriad of burdens and problems she had taken on in the lives of her entire family and a long list of friends. (Her friends are such that one of them, a young pregnant wife, recently declared that she didn't want any of her own friends anymore; she just wanted the Williamses' friends.) Getting along on two or three hours of sleep at night, Mrs. Williams somehow often managed to take Zelda to school, to ballet class, to a friend's house, to shop for an Easter dress, or to take Cody, in a canvas carrier on her back, to the marina, to the Exploratorium, to Marine World. When the family travelled, she would pack and arrange for the tickets and transport. She remembered who got what medication and when for the children, for the pets, and for herself. She also often managed to give the kids their baths, put them to bed, and—with Robin—read to them, and conduct a lot of unflaggingly patient, interminable discussions or debates with them. She conferred with Robin's two C.A.A. agents at the time, Michael Marcus and Michael Menchel, known to the Williamses as Mike and Mike (Marcus has just become the president of M-G-M); she consulted the Williamses' lawyer, Gerald Margolis; she listened to Fox marketing representatives (it often costs twenty million dollars just to market a film effectively these days, for example); and she heard from three gentlemen named Larry Brezner, David Steinberg, and Steve Tenenbaum, who, somewhere along the line in Robin Williams' career, had become officially associated with him as managers. To Mr. and Mrs. Williams, they are known as "the boys." One of the boys, David Steinberg, turned up on the set early in the filming. The filmmakers were working on an exterior scene at the house from which Daniel was about to be dislodged after giving a wild party to celebrate his son's twelfth birthday: lots of messy kids, a large assortment of petting animals (a pony, a pig, a goat, and many chickens among them), along with the standard balloons, cake, and whatnot. The crew immediately took notice of Steinberg's up-to-the-moment "Hollywood" regalia: graying hair fashionably but not Rockerly long, black silk shirt, perfect black jeans, black alligator belt with silver buckle in a chic loop, black leather Cole-Haan loafers worn with no socks, and a cigar (Monte Cristo).

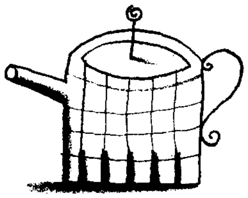
"I came up just to be supportive," Steinberg told me. "The other stuff we do with Marsha." He watched and kibbitzed and enjoyed himself. "This picture is gonna be a huge one," he advised me. "Kids, animals, and Robin in drag. This one jumped up and grabbed Robin."

The transformation of Robin Williams from the thirtyish Daniel into the sixtyish Mrs. Doubtfire was a work of magic. Of the seventy days scheduled for filming, forty-one called for that transformation. It took four and a half hours to achieve, beginning at 5 A.M., so that Williams would be ready at nine-thirty for the first shot of the day. At my first glimpse of "her," on that preproduction Saturday, I didn't know, let alone believe, that it had actually happened until the actor greeted me, albeit in his housekeeper's voice, by name. Ten weeks later, I found myself still staring at him as "her" and trying to remember Robin Williams' face. He is my friend, and I know his face, but when I looked at "her" I could not visualize him. He didn't seem to have that sort of difficulty holding on to himself, however much he cared for "her." One day during the filming of a scene that had Mrs. Doubtfire shopping in a grocery store—a location at the corner of Columbus and Vallejo Streets, just between North Beach and Chinatown, and near the hungry i, one of the night clubs in which Williams used to appear—he emerged in full costume between takes and headed on foot toward North Beach. People on the street paid no attention to "her." "I kind of like to wander around this way," he told me. "To see what it's like."

In the early weeks of filming, Mrs. Williams regularly got up at 4 A.M. to join her husband on the set for the 5 A.M. call. Once his makeup session was over, she would discuss with him points bearing on questions of characterization, or arrange for such things as a foot massage during the meal-break release from Mrs. Doubtfire's painful shoes and other appliances, or agree with him that Mark Radcliffe should be promoted in the movie's credits from "Executive Producer" to "Producer," because of the heavier contribution to the picture he was turning out to make, or consult with him on some particular lighting ideas that the cinematographer, Donald McAlpine ("Breaker Morant," "Moscow on the Hudson," "Down and Out in Beverly Hills"), had come up with, or inform him that their First Assistant Director, Geoff Hansen, who had gone to film school with Chris Columbus, had the most resonant and most effective voice of any First A.D. in the history of film, or tell him about the dailies (he never goes to see them), or bring good tidings of the enthusiasm from the Fox executives over the dailies.

She kept me posted on pertinent revelations. "Chris Columbus has so much energy, and he's not afraid to listen," she told me at one point. "Chris is confident. The confident ones are open to the fresh and the new."

Columbus is thirty-four, a gum-chewing, small-cigar-smoking, friendly, outgoing, alert man who resembles Macaulay Culkin stretched tall and disguised with large eyeglasses on his boyish face. Columbus is noticeably quick to grasp what is said to him. He was born in Warren, Ohio, and named Chris, not Christopher. His favorite utterance, frequently bestowed on Williams and the other actors at whom the camera was aimed, was "Great!" With the word came an appreciative and unmistakably joyous laugh. But he kept the camera rolling until he got what he wanted. And there was no mistaking the certainty, accompanied by impressively consistent good humor, with which he went for what he wanted. He said that he couldn't get over how lucky he was to have such "great actors" to work with, and that included the children—Lisa Jakub, Matthew Lawrence, and Mara Wilson, who play Daniel's thirteen-, twelve-, and five-year-olds, respectively, in the film. "The two older kids are so good, and at that age it's astounding," he said. He would speak the lines for the youngest and then hear them echoed exactly as he wanted her to say them. "Aren't these kids wonderful?" he said. "I never had kids like this before." It went differently with Williams. They consulted together after each take. No matter how late the hour, or how many takes had already been shot, both men were inexhaustible in trying a shot this way and that until they were satisfied. "Robin gives two hundred and fifty per cent," Chris Columbus said. "I've never met an actor so giving. He's concerned about every aspect of the performance. He's not at all a guy who rests on his laurels."



Williams' energy was phenomenal enough, but when a shot was taken and Columbus called "Cut!" Williams had seemingly endless energy left over for antics, all of it raising the spirits and energy level of everybody else. For the cast members acting with Williams, his layer upon layer of inventiveness set off still more layers of responsive invention in them. "With Robin, you just get hold of the comet and hang on," Robert Prosky said.

One of the most serious scenes in the film has Miranda telling Daniel that she wants a divorce. As with most other movies, this scene was filmed out of chronological sequence in the story—in this case, weeks after the scene in the courtroom in which Daniel pleads with the judge not to separate him from his children. He shows shock, fear, and pathos in response to Miranda's range of emotions—sympathy, anguish, frustration, and sadness, along with determination. Columbus explained to me that in rewriting the script he had had a definite "rhythm" in mind for this scene.

"I wanted the pacing to have the highs and the lows when she tells Daniel 'It's over,'" he said. "And then I wanted it to take on a quiet. You film your peaks, and then you go into the editing room and find the perfect balance."

"Can you remember each shot?" I asked him.

"I can remember *every* shot," he said, with a grin. "I have such a connection with them, I can remember every one." Columbus took the shot repeatedly—until Miranda spoke the words "I want a divorce" in the way he wanted to hear them eventually in the editing room. Miranda said softly, "I want a divorce." And, again, "I want a divorce." As Williams heard the words, the expression on his face was one of simple frozen agony.

"Cut!" Columbus called.

Everybody watching was deeply affected, and drained, and distraught. There was a moment or so of complete silence.

Williams took a breath, and suddenly erupted into standup comedy. "You can have the upstairs!" he yelled in a heavy Jewish accent. "I'll take the downstairs! You can't have the whole house! I'll bring witnesses!" And everybody started laughing.

The Williamses are living in a four-bedroom rented house while they wait for the completion, planned for October, of a new home—a large stucco house with a tiled roof, which resembles a Mediterranean villa. (They also have a six-hundred-acre ranch, thick with cows, in the Napa Valley.) In addition to "Mrs. Doubtfire," Mrs. Williams has been producing the remodelling of the villa. She has designed and planned every room, every floor, every ceiling, every molding, every hinge, every glazed argon-filled window (most energy efficient, like the electric car), every cedar and part-cedar shelf, every tile, every piece of woodwork, every piece of metal, every computer location, every light-switch plate, every button, and—so it seems to me—every view. The view from the master bedroom stretches from the Golden Gate Bridge to the Pacific Ocean.

"It's amazing," Mr. Williams said of this domestic production. "It's wonderful. And it's going to have what she calls 'all of your stuff and all of my stuff' right in it. It's a warm, interesting *home*," he added, looking sort of stunned at the prospect, as though a family living together were a unique adventure.

The production picture at home is filled out by the presence of half a dozen loyal aides, two iguanas, two guinea pigs, and an aging rabbit. A sickly chameleon, Norton, was present until recently. Rebecca Spencer, one of the loyal aides, took care of Norton, but to no avail: he died, and was buried, with a simple service, in the garden behind the house. Spencer, a freckle-faced protector with a spectacular head of long, wild red hair, is addicted to colorful ensembles featuring such items as purple high-top sneakers with orange laces, baseball knickers, and a denim vest with multiple pockets holding cellular phone, walkie-talkie, notebook, pen, bottled water, and lipstick. Her friendship with Williams began in 1980, when she was managing the comedy club Holy City Zoo and he was doing his standup there. She and her husband, the comic actor Dan Spencer, are steady fixtures in the life of the Williamses. Cyndi Margolis, a tall, pretty young woman whose job title for "Mrs. Doubtfire" is "assistant to Marsha Williams," is another. (She is also married to Gerald Margolis, the Williamses' lawyer.) Margolis, upon learning one day that the pet rabbit and guinea pigs had eaten all their hard-to-find timothy hay, organized a search all over the city for it, and found it. "Everybody who works for us is our friend" was Mrs. Williams' comment on the expedition.

The kitchen of the Williamses' present home is a kind of hub of their lives. In the early evening, the kids are at the table drawing or reading or stringing beads or doing puzzles or doing homework or singing. A favorite song is "A Friend Like Me," from "Aladdin," the top-grossing film of 1992 (two hundred and fifteen million dollars so far) and the highest-grossing film in Disney's history—a pinnacle that, as is acknowledged generally among film-business pundits, was reached thanks to Robin Williams' creation of the character of the Genie. Crayon drawings by the kids are tacked to the wall, including Zelda's rendition of a spider, showing it equipped with the requisite eight legs. ("Maybe she'll be the artist I started out to be," her mother says.) While monitoring the activities, Mrs. Williams might be cooking dinner with one hand and, with the other, holding a telephone to her ear, conferring with Chris Columbus about their decision to have Howard Shore compose the music for the film, and then shifting gears to reassure Columbus about his baby son Brendan, who had a temperature of a hundred and three the night before ("He's fine if he's lively; when they're sluggish, you worry"), and going on to discuss with him "the meal penalty" or "the overtime penalty" or "the turnaround rule," or reminding Rebecca Spencer, serving as Robin's assistant on the set, to give him his cup of black coffee before he goes into makeup, because he "drinks it by the ton."

When Mr. Williams isn't working, he, too, sits at the kitchen table, handing Cody pieces of pasta; Cody squeezes one piece after another, shoving them all into his mouth, while keeping an eye on everybody else in the room. Ten-year-old Zachary, a saintly-faced, soft-spoken boy, revels in his father's comic antics at the dinner table and often sets them off with well-timed input of his own. Recently, at a huge take-out Chinese dinner that arrived with an ample supply of chopsticks, Zak, with a gleam in his eye, requested a fork. Robin Williams immediately went into a maniacal diatribe, in a staccato Chinese accent, on the etymology and the many uses of the word "fork," rising to a shrill pitch with "Fork you!"—at which point Mrs. Williams stepped in and quieted things down. There always seems to be room at the table for a friend who shows up, or for the pet of a friend—in one case, a huge greyhound, whose huge feeding dishes were accommodated under the table. The kids greet newcomers and old-comers matter-of-factly, and, often, by first name. At home, Mr. Williams may swing, almost imperceptibly, into some singular comic invention. One day last Christmas week, while I was visiting the family in the kitchen, a closed door leading from the kitchen to the cellar, which has sleeping quarters, a television set, and computer games, opened, and Mrs. Williams' twenty-three-year-old niece, Jennifer, and her boyfriend, Rob Sweet, emerged, followed by a couple of other visitors, including a woman from New York, a troubled friend, whom Mrs. Williams had invited to spend the holidays with the family. As the group straggled in, Mr. Williams, in a deep Southern accent, began, "Miz Marsha Tubman's underground railroad . . ."

When he isn't in the kitchen, Mr. Williams may be found entrenched in his study, where he keeps an enormous collection of tiny toy soldiers and figures of fantasy—spacemen, samurai, knights, and robots, some of them less than an inch high and wearing micro armor. Near his desk is a "Hook" pinball machine, a gift from Steven Spielberg. (Top scorer in the family on "Hook" is Mrs. Williams, with a hundred and seventy-five million points.) The study also contains Mr. Williams' new state-of-the-art computer, with pedals and Thrustmaster joystick, for playing complicated interactive games. On top of the computer sits a ribboned sailor cap bearing a gold hammer-and-sickle within a red star and Russian lettering spelling "C.C.C.P." and the name of the cap's designated ship. (A souvenir from "Moscow on the Hudson" filming.) From time to time, Cody toddles in, curls up in his father's lap, and concentrates totally on his father's playing of such interactive computer games as Red Baron: World War I Dogfighting Action, or Star Wars X-Wing: Space Combat Simulator. One corner of the study is reserved for Zachary, and contains his computer and stack of computer games, including his particular favorite, Lemming Island. Zachary positions himself in the study regularly with his father and Cody. At such moments, with the three males in the study (forty-something, ten-something, and one-something) serenely lost in their computers, and Marsha and Zelda (thirty-something and four-something) in the kitchen, the Williams household can look perilously close to an updated Norman Rockwell vision.

Ever since the preproduction of "Mrs. Doubtfire," Mrs. Williams had been warning her husband about how physically taxing the role would be. To keep him in shape, she eventually enlisted the help of a trainer and a yoga instructor, who took turns working out with him. The workouts—running, stretching, biking, roller-blading, and being walked on—provided some perks for the rest of the family and their friends. Everybody got into the act. On weekends, the Williamses and their mob could be seen running or roller-blading or biking in the city's parks or along the marina, often with a child on the back of each parent, and with the latest

EUROBARNEY
Zank heavonz for leetle girls...
Shanahan

*“I do have a fallback position, but it involves firearms.”*

• •

addition to the family, a three-year-old formerly unwanted white boxer, galumphing behind.

ANYBODY who has ever visited a movie set knows what it looks like: there’s the hardworking crew in jeans and sneakers, with the walkie-talkies, beepers, and tools hanging from their belts, logos on their jackets identifying them with past films they’ve worked on; the loud-voiced, commanding assistant director, with his walkie-talkie stuck in the back of his belt; the lights, cameras, camera cranes, dollies, catering trucks, snack tables, canvas folding chairs, video monitors, and sound booms. And what it sounds like: “Cut!” “It’s a cut.” “Check the gate!” “Stand by, please!” “Rolling!” “Sound speed!” “Action!” “Background!” “Stand by to lock it up!” “O.K., guys, give the set to grips and electric!” And “M.O.S.!”—the famous “Mit Out Sound!” sometimes attributed to Erich von Stroheim when he was first starting out as a director in the nineteen-twenties. With all this going on, a visitor can feel the kind of concentration, and the energy for the concentration, that is required. Mr. Williams seems always to have energy left over for what is loosely known as “the human consideration.” During a lunch break on one of the early filming days, before everybody had got to know everybody else well, Mr. and Mrs. Williams were sitting down to their food at a long table when Mr. Williams noticed that Sally Field was looking around shyly for a place to sit. Immediately, he started yelling, in one of his Southern accents, “Get over heah, Norma Rae! You just get right over heah, you mind me now, Norma Rae!”

Mr. Williams has his own special way of retreating at necessary intervals into his private quiet. He might look oblivious of his surroundings, but being around him one learned that he was absorbing every move, every gesture, every expression, every incident that transpired in his presence. Anyone who was around him on or off the set continued to witness sudden, unexpected explosions of what his mother calls his “mission on earth.”

To some visiting kids—staring wide-eyed at him in his Mrs. Doubtfire costume and whispering to each other “That’s him,” “No, that’s *her*”—in a heavy Jewish accent, “This is Tante Zayde.”

To Chris Columbus, after conferring with him between takes: “When in doubt, I’ll just do this,” putting his hands to the sides of his face à la “Home Alone” Macaulay Culkin.

Out of the blue, as a money-saver with a heavy Scottish accent: “I bought clothes. Not many. One loafer for each child.”

Out of the blue, as a resentful parent: “We didn’t even have *air* when we were growing up. We had to go out and get our own oxygen and hydrogen.”

To the current chairman of the Fox Film Corporation, Peter Chernin, visiting the set one day: in a tone of heavy appreciation, looking over Chernin’s dark business suit, “Armani surplus!”

Chernin laughed. He didn’t make any mention during his visit of the question of “the honest ending” of “Mrs. Doubtfire.”

Late one night, during a break between shots, I sat with Mr. and Mrs. Williams in his trailer, which was parked near the stage. His “Mrs. Doubtfire” bodysuit and dress and shoes were off for a few minutes. His wig and his latex face were on. Wearing a sleeveless plaid flannel vest and plaid flannel shorts, for a brief, cooling respite, he held a Powerbook computer on his lap and was engrossed in playing a game. A few minutes later, he went to the back of the trailer to get dressed again as Mrs. Doubtfire. He was halfway through the filming of the movie. Eighty miles of film was now waiting for editing. There had been a grueling stretch of fifteen- or eighteen-hour days, during which Mrs. Williams worked the same hours as her husband.

I asked her why they had wanted to form their own production company.

“To have the control over when and where we were going to shoot,” she replied promptly. “More than anything else, in order to protect Robin.” ♦

## FICTION

# STRONG

### BY TOM DRURY

LOUISE'S ex-husband followed her home from the portrait studio where she worked. He must have been waiting in his car for her to leave. She drove through the train yard on the outskirts of Stone City, angling between strings of boxcars, but could not lose him.

Eventually, out in the country, she pulled over. She rolled down her window and heard his footsteps approaching on gravel. He leaned into the car, wearing sunglasses and a blue windbreaker.

"Stop chasing me, Tiny," Louise said.

He smiled. "I see you still keep a messy car."

She picked up a bottle cap, as if considering the evidence for his remark. "Twist off," she said.

"Do you remember when we were in high school?" said Tiny.

"We weren't in high school at the same time."

"You weren't a freshman when I was a senior?"

"No, I'm afraid not."

"Well, anyway, in my senior interview they asked, 'What's your pet peeve?' and do you know what I said?"

"Nothing comes to mind," Louise said.

"People who think they are better than others."

"That's what everybody said. And better is not the issue. You want me to say I was wrong. Fine. I was wrong. I wrote the book of wrong. Now stop following me."

"You forget the good times."

"Any life will have some good times, if only by chance."

"I cooked for you when you were sick."

"Never once did you cook for me in six years."

"I most certainly did cook Kraft dinner that time you were sick," Tiny said.

"And why did you?" said Louise. "Because you were hungry."

She went home to an empty farmhouse. Her husband—Dan Norman, the county sheriff—was seeing a therapist at that moment for his insomnia. Louise ran a steaming bath and undressed. She balanced a *Redbook* magazine and a package of Twizzlers on the rim of the tub.

For a half hour she soaked. Then the candy was gone, and the *Redbook* fell into the water. She retrieved the magazine and hung it over the towel rack to dry. She washed and conditioned her hair, rinsing with a red Hills Brothers coffee can.

Dan came home. Louise lay on the bed in a white robe watching square dancing on television. The men had their hands on the women's waists as they all danced among hay bales. This aroused her vaguely. Dan took off his badge and laid it on the dresser.

"Check out the petticoats," said Louise.

"Oo-la-la," Dan said.

"So how was the therapist? Did she fork over the sleeping tablets?"

"She said I should try sleeping outside the house."

"It's cold out there," said Louise.

"Well, she didn't mean outdoors," Dan said. "She meant a motel, I guess."

"Who's going to pay for that?" said Louise.

"I told her it was impossible," said Dan. "We're not even fighting, not really."

"I told her that."

Louise turned on her side. "I seriously hope you did," she said.

Dan's eyes changed as she said this. They got deeper somehow, seemed to focus on something inside her. His hand brushed her throat; he kissed her.

"I mean, Jesus," she whispered, "go for a simple sedative. . . ."

That night she woke up and reached for Dan, finding no one. She got out of bed and went downstairs, where he was reading *Arizona Highways* on the davenport. Louise's mother always gave them her copy when she had finished with it.

"Look at this house," he said. He folded the magazine and showed her. "It's supposed to be haunted."

"By what?" Louise said. "The lonely ghost of a restless sheriff?"

"Don't you see a figure in the window?" he said.

"It's a reflection," said Louise.

FALL was a busy time at Kleeborg's Portraits. On Saturday morning, Louise drove up to take some publicity pictures for Russell Ford's R.V. dealership.

In the photographs Russell's nephew was supposed to embrace a young woman in front of a mobile home. When Louise arrived, the girl was sitting on a spackle bucket in a black-and-gold strapless dress.

"Hey, Maren," said Louise, for it was Maren Staley, a young woman who had come into Kleeborg's a year and a half before to have her high-school picture taken but had been too hungover to pose. Next to Maren's name in the subsequent annual was a drawing of a person in a barrel with shoulder straps. The caption said "Nothing to Wear." Now she was sober and pretty, leaning forward, shielding her sternum from the icy breeze.

Louise got a flannel shirt from her car and gave it to Maren. Russell's nephew Steven drove up. He was a handsome kid in a tuxedo. He didn't look at all like his homely uncle Russell.

The session was dogged by problems. Maren's shoulders got goose bumps. The lights flickered because of a bad connection that could not be isolated. Maren was supposed to hug Steven's neck, but with her arms raised that way the edge of her bra could be seen above the side of her dress.

"Fix her undershirt," Russell Ford said. He stood beside Louise, speaking into a megaphone.

"I'm right here," Louise said. She went over and pinned the bra to the dress.

"And another thing. The trim is bent," said Russell.

"What trim?" said Louise.

"On the motor home," said Russell. He went to find an unmarred example of the particular model he wanted in the advertisement.

Maren put Louise's flannel shirt on and bummed a cigarette. Louise looked in her pack. "There are six," she said. "Take them." The two women climbed into a silver trailer like the kind the astronauts used to recuperate in after coming back from the moon.

"What are you up to?" Louise said.

"I'm in community college now," Maren said. "I've changed a lot, Louise. College has changed me, and this is causing problems for me and Loren. Do you remember Loren?"

"He was your boyfriend, right?"

"That's what the problem is about," said Maren. "I say that I've changed. An example would be that now I love the music of Van Morrison. I listen to 'Veedon Fleece' and sometimes I could just cry. So the other day Loren and I were driving around and he goes, 'Put on some of that Don Morrison.' I mean it breaks your heart."

"People drift apart," Louise said.

"I'm in a two-year program, and then I can take my credits and go anywhere," said Maren. "I may go out to the West Coast. In 'Cannery Row,' by John Steinbeck, the author talks about a marine biologist named Doc who hunts for animals in the tidal pools. And reading this it suddenly dawned on me that I have never put my feet in salt water. And I think that's something I would enjoy doing, given the type of personality I have. Evidently you can float motionless in the water, and there is no way you can sink. Being a poor swimmer, I like the sound of that. So I'm considering California schools. They're all free. What college did you go to?"

"I didn't," said Louise. "I graduated from Grafton High School in the class of seventy-four. We had a guidance counsellor who was really more like a fortune-teller. Instead of giving advice, he would make mysterious predictions. He said, 'Louise, *you will work in a small shop*.' So I guess he got that right."

"Photography is so intense," said Maren.

Russell opened the door and looked in. "Let's hustle, people," he said. "Mercury's falling."

Steven and Maren resumed their embrace. Russell threw his megaphone to the ground. "Now the dress looks bunchy," he said.

"Oh, you look bunchy," said Louise. "Steven! Put your hand on the side of the dress! Where the pins are! Perfect. Let's take some pictures."

By this time, a crowd had gathered on the sidewalk during the photo session. There had been a rumor for years that Sally Field was going to direct and act in a farm movie that would be filmed in Grouse County, and whenever anything resembling acting occurred in public, people would come together and look around hopefully for Sally Field.

This movie had been rumored for so long that the plot had changed from being about a young farm woman with cancer to being about a middle-aged farm woman with cancer. But through it all Sally Field never came to Grouse County, and she never would, and the whole thing was one of those grassroots misunderstandings that refuse to go away.

Something similar occurs after the first ice storm every winter in Louise's mother's yard in Grafton. Louise's mother is Mary Montrose, a member of the Grafton town council who is thought to have a certain amount of clout. The word spreads that a photographer from the Stone City newspaper is coming down to take pictures of the ice formations in Mary's trees. Soon all the parents in Grafton have dragged their kids over to Mary's place with the instructions to get their ass out there and build a snowman. But the afternoon unfolds, and the word proves false, and the sun sets on a poignant landscape of half-finished snow creatures.

But back to Russell Ford's. Among the crowd was Louise's friend Pansy Gansevoort, who airbrushed for Big Chief Printing and had an impressive mane of ginger-colored hair that would have made her a colorful extra in the Sally Field movie that was not to be.

Pansy waited for Louise to finish her work. "Hi, hon," she said. "I just came from Eight Dollars." This was a sprawling store on the edge of town where every item had that price.

"What did you get?" said Louise.

"Two blouses, a case of Cheetos, and a bowling ball," said Pansy.

## FOR A MODEST GOD

That fresh towels invigorate our cheeks,
that spoons tingle in allotted spots,
that forks melodeon the guested air,
that knives prove benign to fingertips,
that our kitchen have the sweet rasp of harmonicas,
that stately sloshings cadence the dishwasher,
that lobsters be reprieved in all the tanks
and mushrooms fetched from caverns for the light,
and that the oil of gladness glisten down
the chins of matriarchs, anoint the crib,
that there be aprons of capacious cloth
enveloping the laps of nimble chefs,
that our sauces thicken on the day of fasts,
that the hearth cat frisk his whiskers and attend,
that no domestic terror smite our minds,
that midnights be benignant with a god's
oven mitts and spatulas and solace-broths:
a little god, a little, modest god, a
godkin in a shriven cupboard, Lares-
palmable and orderly, presiding
over the hierarchies of the silverware,
our platters' strata, and our serving spoons;
a small, dull god, ignorant of thunder,
attuned to nothing somberer than the trills
when all our crockery trembles to the fault
of obscure, dimly rumorous calamities.

—ERIC ORMSBY

"What kind of bowling ball costs eight dollars?" said Louise.

"Well, this is what we're going to find out," said Pansy. "Want to go to the Rose Bowl?"

"I can't bowl," said Louise, "and you bowl league, if I'm not mistaken."

"We'll work on your game," said Pansy.

So they went bowling, but Pansy's tips did not help. Louise was one of those uncanny bowlers who seem to throw directly into the gutter. That afternoon she even managed to make the classic error of rolling the ball after the pin-sweeping gate had descended. The ball cracked into the gate, and everyone stared, and a guy from the alley had to catwalk down the lane divider to retrieve her ball.

Still, the beers were tasty. Pansy and Louise discussed the men they lived with but did not seem to be speaking the same language. Pansy's boyfriend used to be sadistic but now he was just threatening. And Pansy threatened him back, so this amounted to progress in her view.

Pansy's stories involved either herself or the boyfriend cowering in a corner while the other one broke things by throwing them on the floor. Once, Pansy's boyfriend had even entered the kitchen with a pistol that turned out to be a starter's pistol, but could have been real for all Pansy knew.

In comparison, Dan's not being able to sleep or Louise's feeling that something was not right sounded minor.

"I would leave the man," said Louise.

"It's not that easy," said Pansy.

"What's the point if you end up with a broken nose?"

"It's not like that," said Pansy.

"It sounds just like that."

"I love him so bad."

"Maybe it isn't love," said Louise. "Maybe it's more of a sadness you get used to."

Louise was speaking very freely with Pansy. This is sometimes known as "the beer talking," although beer usually speaks in rough, not compassionate, tones. Amid the clatter of falling pins, Louise was getting plastered in that loving and rose-colored way you can on afternoons in October.

At one point she swung her legs from beneath the table and, admiring the cuffs of her clean bluejeans, and her rented shoes with their red suède and olive suède, she said huskily, "I love these fucking shoes."

Eventually Pansy and Louise emerged from the Rose Bowl into the slanting light. Pansy produced from her bowling bag the shoes that Louise had rented.

"What a nice thing," said Louise. She sat down on the curb and put the shoes on.

"You're right about not being able to bowl," Pansy said, "but I still like you."

Louise drove home slowly on narrow and little-used roads, reminded of the mechanical way she used to walk when as a teen-ager she would try to get across the living room and up the stairs without her mother knowing she was drunk.

She and Dan had a fight when she got home. He was grilling peanut-butter sandwiches for supper.

"I wish you wouldn't reach into the bread and tear out pieces of slices," he said.

"I lost my head," she said. She sat in one chair with her feet in the bowling shoes on another.

"That therapist I went to called," said Dan. "She thought maybe you should come in for an appointment."

"She's so perfect," Louise said.

"It's up to you," said Dan.

"Marriage counselling after six months," said Louise. "Not too very promising."

"It isn't marriage counselling," said Dan.

"Divorce is easy," said Louise. "I did it not that long ago. They probably still remember me."

"Oh, cut it out," said Dan. "Where were you this afternoon?"

Louise was crying. "Look at my shoes and guess," she said.

"What's wrong?"

"You married me because I chased you," said Louise. "My mother said, 'Don't chase him, Louise.' But I did. I chased you."

"You didn't chase anyone," said Dan.

"Do you think I'm blind?" said Louise.

"What?"

She wiped her eyes on her sleeve. "I should have been a lot cooler about the whole thing."

"I don't see why."

"Look," said Louise, "do you love me?"

"Yes, I do," said Dan. With the spatula he put grilled sandwiches on a plate. "Don't cry," he said. He had a way of becoming wooden and emotionless just when she needed him to be the opposite.

"I will if I want," said Louise.

This was their biggest fight to date.

LOUISE spent most of the next day talking to some historic-preservation people about a photographic survey of houses. Talk, talk, talk, and then they wanted coffee. They were very concerned with authenticity and seemed to be scrutinizing Louise to see if she was authentic.

Then Louise went over to Russell Ford's and rented a trailer. She thought this could be the separate roof under which Dan might get some sleep, and by doing this good deed she could make up for the fight.

Russell gave her a discount, but still all she could afford was a tiny trailer made in 1976. Inside, there was just enough room to turn around. Russell said he would tow the trailer to the farm and set it up for seventy-five dollars.

"And that's treating you like a sister," he said.

Russell's nephew Steven delivered the trailer two days later. He put a carpenter's level on the fender and turned a crank on the hitch until the trailer was square. He filled the water tank, hooked up the electricity, showed her how the tiny appliances worked.

"Do you think I have a chance with Maren?" he said.

The question sounded to Louise like one you would ask the Magic 8 Ball. She said, "There is always a chance."

She enjoyed preparing the trailer for Dan. She cleaned it all up and made the bed with new sheets, pillows, and a quilt. She put beer in the refrigerator and cattails in a vase on the table. She plugged in a lamp with a warm yellow shade.

By the time Dan came home, she had changed her mind. She opened the door and looked down at him.

"What's this, baby?" said Dan.

"I want to stay," she said. "I fixed this up for you, but I want to stay."

It would be wrong to say that the little trailer solved all their problems. But Dan began to sleep once he had the bed in the house to himself. It is true that his therapist had finally come through with a prescription. Dan and Louise ate together and every night had the pure emotions of parting.

One night, Dan knocked on her door and read for her a speech he was to give at a seminar on domestic violence.

"Sometimes we get a mistaken notion of what is strong," said Dan. "Why? Television, for one reason. We see a man lift five hundred pounds over his head, we see another man tear up the phone book of a large city. It becomes easy to conclude that this is what we mean by 'strong.' But turn off the set. Aren't the real strong men and women right at home, looking out for that family? What do we mean when we say 'strong'?"

KLEEBORG'S PORTRAITS won the bid to take pictures of old houses. For Louise this amounted to long walks with a camera around the nicer parts of Stone City.

Not everyone understood the purpose of the project. Some people dressed up, gathered the kids and the dogs in the front yard. One thin old gentleman with a steep-roofed house built in 1897 showed Louise the spools in his garage. He had attached dozens of small sewing spools to the walls and ceiling, and connected them by taut loops of string, so that when he turned on an electric motor the spools all spun at once, and the knots on the strings danced back and forth.

"Wow," said Louise.

"Each one represents someone I know," the man said.

Louise went to see Dan's therapist. The office had a soft orange chair and a huge inverted cone of an ashtray. A handle on the side of the chair operated the footrest, enabling Louise to raise and lower her feet as needed.

She had expected the therapist to be a bombshell, but she seemed tired and normal. Her name was Robin Otis.

"Where are your parents?" she said.

"My mother lives in Grafton. My father is dead," said Louise.

"How old were you when he died?"

"Well, how old was I. Sixteen," said Louise. "He had a heart attack while getting ready for a party."

"Such loss at a young age," said Robin.

"Yes, well," said Louise.

"Do you remember the last words he said to you?"

"He said for us to have a happy New Year."

"Do you get along with your mother?"

"You could say that," said Louise.

"Tell me about the trailer. I am curious about this. Why did you claim it for yourself?"

"I don't know," said Louise. "It seems familiar. It's clean. It's warm. I don't really know."

"Hmm," said Robin Otis.

"Why, does Dan want it?" said Louise.

"I can never read him," said Robin.

"Tell me about it."

"Sometimes, as I listen to him I find myself thinking, 'What's his story?' "

"I think he wants to stay married," said Louise.

"I have no doubt of it."

Louise walked out of the office through a hallway that served as a waiting room not only for the therapist but also for a dentist and an accountant.

A couple sat between a stack of hunting magazines and a stack of *Highlights for Children*. Louise pushed a button and stood waiting for an elevator.

"All I'm saying is that we don't necessarily need to get into specifics about sex," said the man.

"Ho ho, you wait," said the woman.

As part of the architectural survey Louise took a picture of a fortune-teller's house on Pomegranate Avenue. The house was built from rocks of all sizes, with a roofline that curved like a roller coaster. A sign out front said "Mrs. England Palms And Cards." It was an eclectic house, and the woman who came to the door had huge arms and fogged glasses.

"I'm here to take pictures of the house," Louise said.

"My name is Mrs. England," said the woman. "Let me shut off my story."

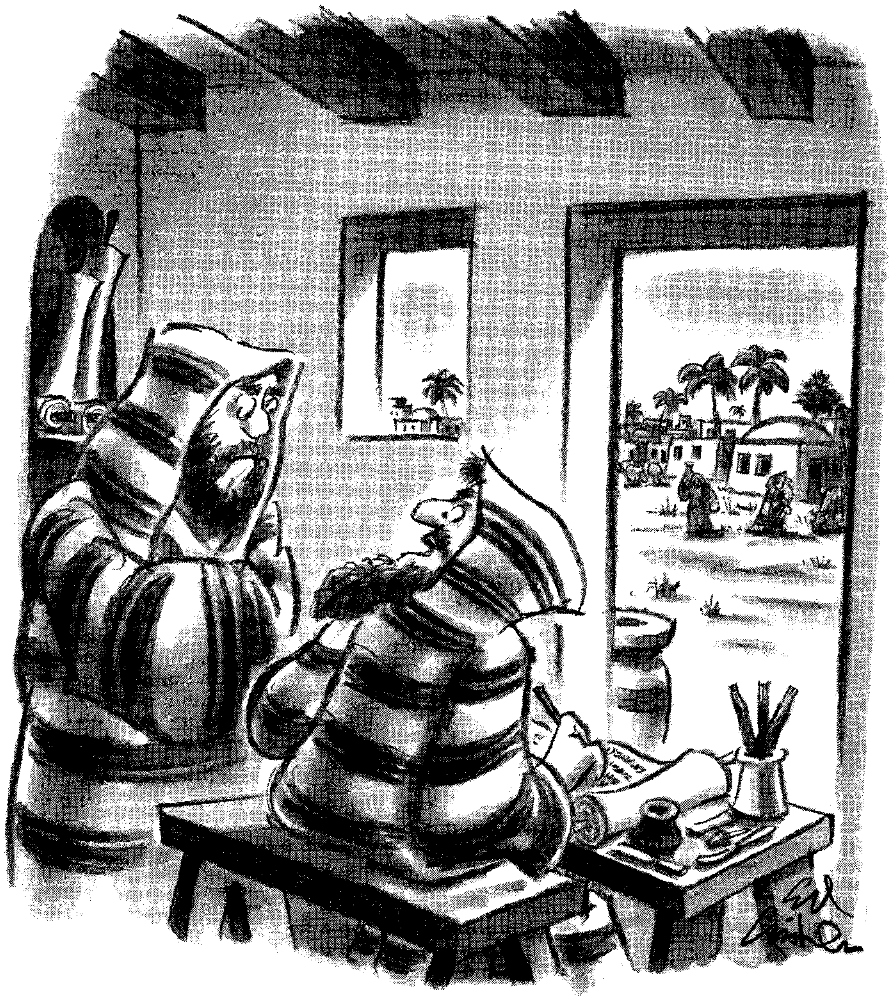
She went through an arched doorway, leaving Louise in the front room. The house seemed perfectly silent.

"Nice place," Louise called.

There were round mirrors and a painting of a man with a T-square. Turtles and newts dragged themselves across a sandy tank. A map of the solar system hung on the wall, with an arrow saying "You Are Here."

"Mr. England built this house," said Mrs. England. "He built houses all over Stone City, but he considered them tame. He was happy enough to build the houses that people wanted, but he also wanted the chance to build a house that would satisfy his need for self-expression. This is his portrait. He was a wild man who perished in the war."

"I'm sorry," said Louise. Mrs. En-



*"You mean when I use a phrase like 'Pharaoh dreamed seven cows came up out of the Nile,' or 'God remembered Noah,' or David's wife Michal 'despised him in her heart'—that's speculative journalism?"*

gland took her by the hand and led her to a purple davenport.

"He used the materials of his region and got it all at cost, and I loved him," Mrs. England said. "How late are you?"

Louise sat down. "Eleven days," she said.

"That's a lot," Mrs. England said.

Louise sank into the davenport. "How did you know?"

"By touching your hand," Mrs. England said. "Didn't you read my shingle? I guess you assume it's all fake. Well, it isn't all fake. I should say not."

"I don't get it," Louise said. "Can you tell from the temperature?"

"Oh, it's complicated," Mrs. England said, with a wave of her hand.

"Am I pregnant?" asked Louise.

"I couldn't say for sure that you are," said Mrs. England. "But I do know how you can find out. You go down another five blocks and you will come to a Rexall's."

"Yes," said Louise.

"They've got little kits that you can do at home," said Mrs. England.

The pregnancy tests were on a shelf between the condoms and the sinus pills. Louise compared the brands without the first idea of what she was looking for. She passed over two tests that could be done in one step, because that did not seem like enough steps. Another featured a plastic wand that was to be held in the "urine stream," and she rejected this as well.

Most of the kits were fifteen dollars, but some were eleven, and she ruled out the less expensive ones on the theory that something must account for the price difference, and after all she wasn't going to be buying a pregnancy test every day of the week. Beyond these judgments she went by the design of the packaging. Almost all the boxes had red lines or red words, as if invoking some kind of nostalgia for the menstrual cycle. The brand she chose suggested urgency and yet not outright panic.

On her way to the counter Louise checked to make sure this particular test had a price tag so the cashier would not take a silver microphone and ask all over the store for a price check on the pregnancy test. She need not have worried. The salesboy rang up the purchase with the blank and undiscerning face that they must teach in salesboy school. She might have been buying a key chain, or toothpaste, or flashbulbs, instead of embarking on the mystery of life. ◆

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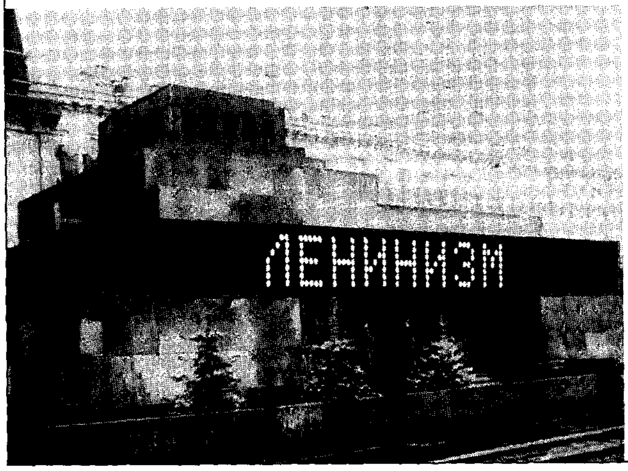

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THE CRITICS

## THE THEATRE

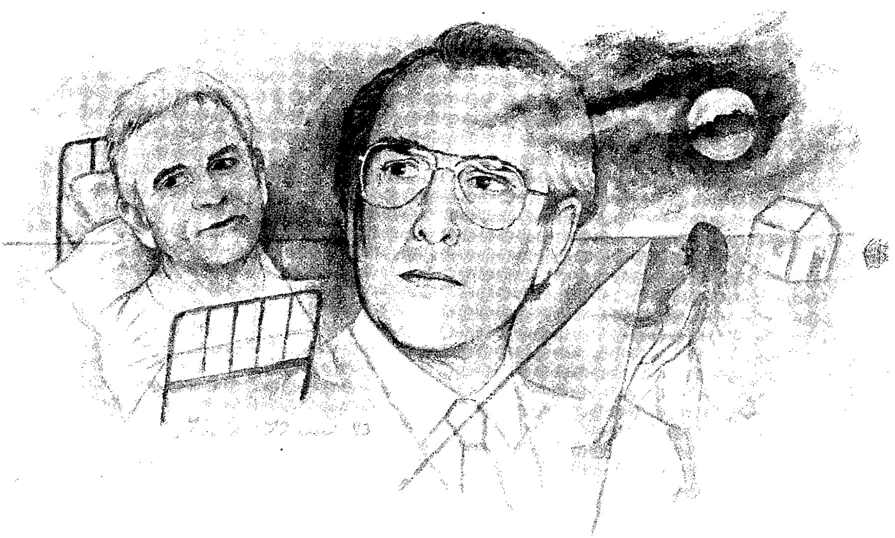
# PINTER'S NIGHT SWEATS

### BY JOHN LAHR

HAROLD PINTER is the pathfinder of postwar English drama. No modern British playwright has been more controversial, more imitated, more influential, or more published. Since Pinter's London début, in 1958, with his first full-length play, "The Birthday Party," he has written at last count twenty-six volumes, including plays, screenplays, and poems, and has also directed and occasionally acted for the stage. He has been a mentor to such highly original and varied dramatists as Heathcote Williams, Joe Orton, and David Mamet. Besides his own body of work, he has generated a mountain of critical studies and doctorates filtering his ambiguous images through any number of ideological lenses. Such is the vastness of this academic enterprise that there is even a journal devoted exclusively to Pinter studies. This year alone, Pinter has performed in the successful West End revival of his "No Man's Land"; directed David Mamet's "Oleanna," which is soon to transfer to the West End after a sold-out run at the Royal Court; and had his film version of Kafka's "The Trial" released. And last week, at the resourceful Almeida Theatre, in Islington, he opened his first full-length play in fifteen years, "Moonlight."

"I have no aim in writing other than exploring the images that come into my mind," Pinter said in 1988. "I find some of those images really shocking, so they shock me into life and into the act of writing." In public, Pinter is sometimes intemperate and hectoring, but in his writing he remains a poet, open and unjudgmental of the images served up by his unconscious, and courageously waiting for their mysterious arrival. This is not a happy situation, and he has had to learn to live with uncertainty. When a play finally does materialize, the anxiety of the unknown is inevitably part of the drama and the structure. "My characters tell me so much and no more," he said in his earliest and clearest account of his method, in the *Sunday Times* in 1962. This murky imaginative territory of unresolved and probably unresolvable feeling yielded an extraordinarily fecund early period. There was "The Birthday Party," "The Caretaker" in 1960, and "The Homecoming" in 1965, followed by an impasse that was announced in "No Man's Land," of 1975—a place, as one character says, "which never moves, which never changes, which never grows older, but which remains forever icy and silent"—and that was finally broken, in 1978, by the more direct narrative of "Betrayal." After that, Pinter, styling himself as an activist, managed a series of increasingly slighter, less convincing polemical finger exercises ("Mountain Language," "Party Time," "The New World Order"). And then, in the playwright's sixty-third year, "Moonlight" suddenly happened—a gift that bears out W. B. Yeats' dictum "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric; but out of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry." Grief-stricken and furious, "Moonlight" lays an ambush of language and imagery to catch the unspoken and unspeakable sorrow that surrounds a dying man's sad little wish to be loved. "Moonlight" is a big, brave play, as dramatically compact and as emotionally searing as anything Pinter has written.

Moonlight is the apt shadowy, mercurial ambience for Pinter's characters, who exist in an unstable state of half-openness, moving perpetually between



*Ian Holm (left) in the London production of "Moonlight," Harold Pinter's first major play in fifteen years.*

PAUL DAVIS

the seen and the unseen, sleep and wakefulness, outer and inner life. Pinter resists interpretation, and so does David Leveaux's expert production. "The play works as a direct appeal to the unconscious," Leveaux says. "One must try one's best to remove the anxiety of interpretation or intellectual obfuscation for an audience. Otherwise, the air is too noisy for an audience collectively to receive things at the level at which they need to be received. What Pinter is trying to show is the most intensified form of reality, as opposed to a kind of metaphorical reality." Accordingly, Leveaux's stage pictures have a limpid, supra-real quality. Even Pinter's stage directions hint at magic realism: "Fred in bed. Jake in to him." "Enter" would suggest that the characters were coming *from* somewhere. The surreal is also implied elegantly in Bob Crowley's minimal set, which offers the audience a world that is literally divided—by a painted piece of white gauze that extends from the large gray upper chamber of the stage, where the sixteen-year-old Bridget (Claire Skinner) first addresses the audience ("I can't sleep," she says, a sleepwalker announcing the restlessness of the play's other uneasy souls), to the floor below, separating the bunk bed of a son's sleeping quarters from the more substantial brass bed of his dying father.

"Moonlight" is a haunted play that begins and ends with a haunting. Bridget, in bare feet and a white cotton nightgown, stands before us in the half-light, willing herself to be quiet for her parents' sake. She sounds a new note in the usual furious hubbub of Pinter's plays: an innocent, who speaks without guile. "They need to sleep in peace and wake up rested. I must see that this happens," she says. "It is my task. Because I know that when they look at me they see that I am all they have left of their life." Although Bridget talks of her parents, they hardly ever mention her name, and the lilies placed downstage in a vase hint at a far greater loss, which the audience only gradually understands. She is the manifestation of a catastrophe of which her dying father, Andy, and his wife, Bel, can hardly speak. She is dead. ("I want to put my cards on the table about one thing," Pinter told David Leveaux. "There are many things I don't know about the play, but I have a strong feeling Bridget is dead.") Just how or why she died we never know. But she brings glimpses of the shadow world that grows closer for Andy with each beat of the play. Bridget, as her family says, is the one who understands. In one gorgeous monologue, she talks of journeying through "fierce landscapes" into a sheltering jungle. "I can hide. I am hidden," she says, in a speech that suggests the father's fantasy of solace. "The flowers surround me but they don't imprison me. I am free. Hidden but free. I'm a captive no longer. I'm lost no longer. No-one can find me or see me. I can be seen only by eyes of the jungle, eyes in the leaves. But they don't want to harm me."

Shame, which has its root in a word for "cover," is what sends the dying Andy (and all Pinter's characters) scurrying into nervy defensive maneuvers, those famous and still potent Pinter evasions, put-ons, and put-downs, with which they attempt to face off the prying eyes of the world. "Where are the boys? Have you found them?" are Andy's first, punishing words. Played with rueful, bullying brilliance by Ian Holm (returning to the stage after fourteen years), Andy is shamed both by the memory of loss and by the fact that his sons will not come to his deathbed. He is unwanted as a parent, and unreachable as a husband. Andy's impotence is overwhelming. He says later, fumbling in the moonlight for a nightcap: "No fags, no fucks. Bollocks to the lot of them." Pinter's dialogue marvellously subverts each clinched emotional moment, moving by turns from pain to mockery and on to corrosive rage as Andy tries to manufacture a sense of potency from the dross of his humiliation. "Where are they?" he says. "Two sons. Absent. Indifferent. Their father dying." Bel (played superbly by Anna Massey, with sad-eyed sang-froid) reminds him that they were good boys, who helped her do the dishes. "The clearing of the table, the washing-up, the drying. Do you remember?" The question allows Holm, who played Lenny in the original production of "The Homecoming," and who knows how to drive a Pinter line hard to its lethal payoff, to swoop down on her like a bird of prey:

> You mean in the twilight? The soft light falling through the kitchen window? The bell ringing for Evensong in the pub round the corner? [*Pause*] They were bastards. Both of them. Always.

The invective at once admits and

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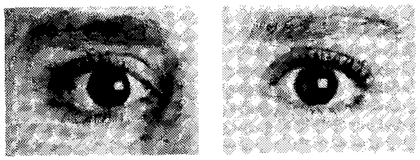

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conceals hurt not just about the children but about the absence of intimacy between Bel and himself. Mockery is their oxygen and their substitute for passion. Pinter invokes the word "mockery" in the first five minutes of the play and, in the next hour and a quarter, proceeds to demonstrate all its penetrating guises: sometimes killing grief ("You're not a bad man," Bel says to Andy. "You're just what we used to call a loudmouth") and sometimes causing it ("Think of the wonder of it," Andy says. "I betrayed you with your own girlfriend, she betrayed you with your husband and she betrayed her own husband—and me—with you! She broke every record in sight! She was a genius and a great fuck"). Andy's onslaughts are beaten back by Bel, who gives as good a low blow as she gets. "She's probably forgotten you're dying," she says to Andy when he complains that the girlfriend isn't there to console him. "If she ever remembered."

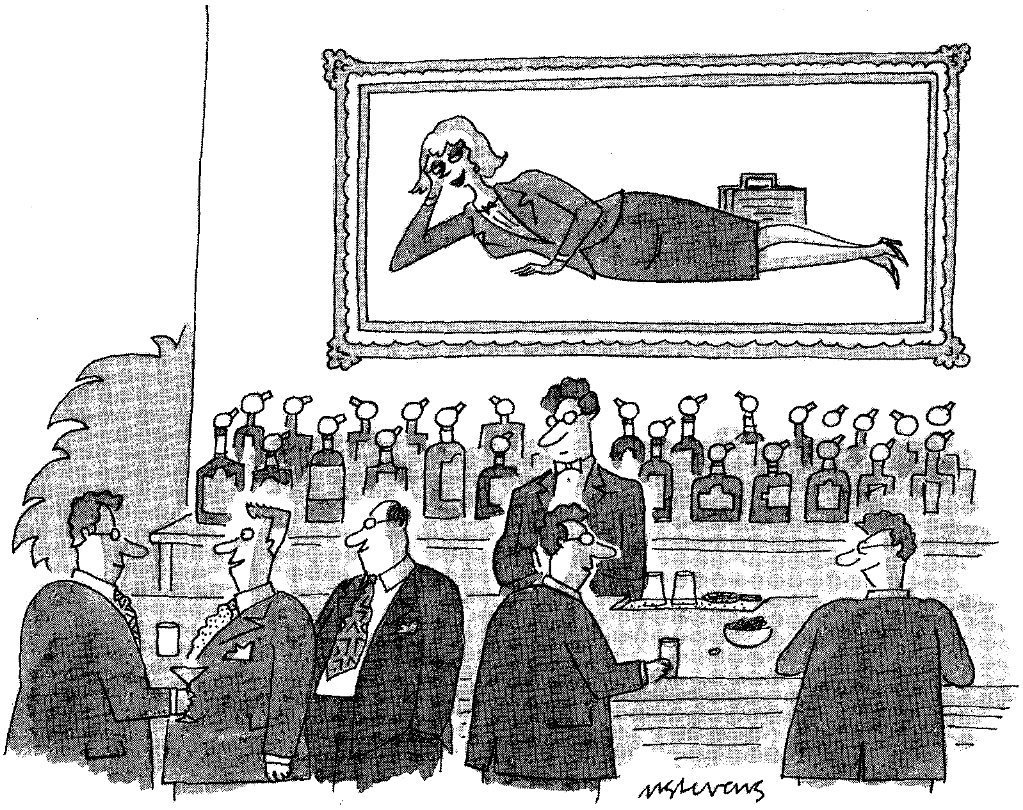
But words can't reach Andy's sons, the bedridden and perhaps dying Fred (Michael Sheen) and the caustic Jake (Douglas Hodge). They won't talk to him, or even mention his name except to viciously belittle his memory. "Oh, your father? Was he the one who was sleeping with your mother?" Fred says to Jake. In their suffocating and unrelenting sendups, Pinter magnifies Andy's spiritual isolation. No claim of the father is allowed to stand unmocked. The public admiration of Andy as a civil servant is a source of his sons' private ridicule. They call him The Incumbent. Andy's value as a provider, and even his paternity, are turned upside down. The terror behind this manic subterfuge reflects Andy's volatile temperament. "In all your personal and social attachments the language you employed was mainly coarse, crude, vacuous, puerile, obscene and brutal to a degree," Bel says at one point. "Most people were ready to vomit after no more than ten minutes in your company." Andy's sons are victims turned victimizers. They show no remorse and offer no reconciliation. In the play's penultimate moment, Bel finally makes the call to her boys. Jake picks up the phone and says, "Chinese laundry." "Your father is very ill," Bel says softly, her eyes brimming with tears. Jake hands the phone to his brother. "Chinese laundry," he says. The silence that follows is noisy with a lifetime's unspoken regret and fury. Family is refused a place in the boys' reality, and the only way to reach them is to live within their fiction. "Do you do dry cleaning?" Bel says, finally. The harrowing and brilliant scene ends with Jake, having hung up, bending over the phone and shouting, "Of course we do dry cleaning! Of course we do dry cleaning! What kind of fucking laundry are you if you don't do dry cleaning?"

The play's sense of grief is all the more immense for being unspoken. There are no words for the kind of loss Pinter is talking about—only intimations. At one point, late in the play, under the cover of darkness, Andy inhabits the shadowy space usually occupied by Bridget, who materializes briefly in his empty bedroom, and talks to himself. "Ah darling," he says, filling the silence with heartbreaking remorse. "Ah my darling." In this brief and eloquent moment, we feel a hurt beyond repair. Bel appears in the moonlight. They look at each other and turn away: a dumb show of the unbreachable and infuriating separation from others which the play's final moments incarnate. As Bridget tells one last story, all the characters are set out in a tableau of disconnected angles. Bridget confides a dream in which she is invited by, perhaps, her parents to come to a party but is told to come when the moon is down:

> When I got to the house it was bathed in moonlight. The house, the glade, the lane, were all bathed in moonlight. But the inside of the house was dark and all the windows were dark. There was no sound. [*Pause*] I stood there in the moonlight and waited for the moon to go down.

When the moon finally does vanish, Andy will be dead. Meanwhile, Pinter leaves us with a final image of abandonment and total disconnection. The sense of separation is cavernous.

"Moonlight" is Pinter's most satisfying play since "The Homecoming," and ranks among his major works. It will bring Pinter yet greater glory. But what is so cunning and so courageous about the play is that it's a testament not only to the audacity of his terrific talent but to the frightful price he has paid for it. Many interpretations of the play will follow. For me, it's a magnificent map of individualism's dead heart; and, for those who know how to read it, "Moonlight" shows where the bodies are buried. ♦



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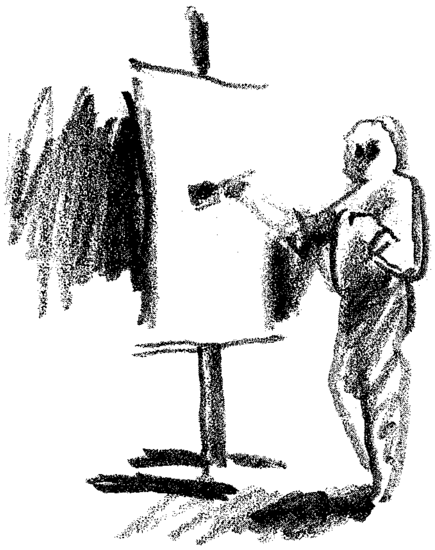
## THE CURRENT CINEMA

# BACK TO THE EASEL

### BY ANTHONY LANE

JACQUES RIVETTE'S "La Belle Noiseuse" came out in 1991, and lasted four hours, although at the time it seemed no more than five or six. Now we have "Divertimento," half the length, and a different beast altogether—constructed, indeed, from different takes. The bulk of the long version was taken up by an encounter between an artist and his model; the primary image was of a hand moving scratchily over paper, and the effect was hypnotic—you were never bored, but you almost wished you had been, so strenuous was the effort of matching the artist's concentration. These studio sessions have now been pared back, and you have to admire Rivette for performing such ruthless surgery on his own work; it makes a change from all the expanded "Special Editions" foisted on us by other directors—by Kevin Costner, for instance, whose recut of "Dances with Wolves" includes previously unseen footage of Kevin Costner.



OLIVER WILLIAMS

The action, if you can call it that, takes place over a few days in the South of France. Together with his girlfriend, Marianne (Emmanuelle Béart), a young artist named Nicolas (David Bursztein) is invited to meet one of his heroes, Édouard Frenhofer (Michel Piccoli)—a celebrated painter, many years his senior, who lives and works in a large house near Montpellier. The house is almost the hero of this movie, sometimes hemming the characters in, at other times encouraging them to lounge with elegance. From the street, it resembles a church, with broad steps leading up to chunky double doors; at roof level, however, where Frenhofer has his studio, it feels more like the castle of some minor duke, complete with parapets and an airy panoramic view, to which the camera casually turns when the drama is getting too intense. Frenhofer's wife, Liz (Jane Birkin), shows her guests "the chimera room, my favourite, because it serves no purpose." The implications of that line throb through the movie. It has a kind of aimless, drowsy magic—people keep dropping into a light snooze at random times of day. Not a lot happens here, but almost anything *could* happen; chimeras are waiting around the corner.

Frenhofer is the Prospero of this domain, albeit a Prospero in the twilight of his powers, waving a broken wand. No wonder that Michel Piccoli should feast on the role with such relish, for it drips with his favorite moods: the magisterial and the glum. When the call goes out for a benign yet crusty patriarch, American cinema turns to Jason Robards or James Earl Jones, but let's be honest: the French still stock the best vintages—Philippe Noiret, Michel Serrault, and, above all, Piccoli. He enjoyed himself no end in Louis Malle's laid-back idyll, "May Fools," stripped to the waist and feeling for crayfish with his bare hands; now, in "Divertimento," he has the air of one who has passed beyond simple pleasures and stumbled into the complications of old age. The epicure's touch has not deserted him—we first see him holding a dead rabbit, which means dinner, and his hours of painting are nicely oiled by swigs of red wine—but his mind is elsewhere, nicked by doubt and self-scorn. He sags and shuffles, and bumps into invisible walls; it's a marvellous, slightly upsetting picture of a man refusing to mellow.

If Frenhofer were more lonely, this last stand might be suffused with heroism; but he's surrounded by fans, and the roughness rubs off on them and scars their admiration. Standing in his studio, he makes them anything but welcome: "Liz and I have achieved a state of peaceful stability, even happiness. You arrive, and unhappiness begins. . . . Nothing personal, but for all of us the irrevocable has happened. . . . You bring us trouble, upset. You, too, will be unhappy." He acts like Duncan, but he sounds like one of the three witches, and this bizarre speech tells us, unmistakably, that we have arrived in Jacques Rivette country. The generous foreboding, the vatic utterance that you hope will turn out to be a joke, the shaggy-dog story with extra bite—these have been his hallmarks ever since "Paris Belongs to Us" (1962), which jumbled up a conspiracy thriller with an ad-hoc production of "Pericles." All the world was a stage, and vice versa. Most films like to expose the theatrical side of our nature, presuming that the grandiloquence of the politician, the sexual braggart, or the party host can only be a sham. It was "Citizen Kane" that first had the audacity to suggest the opposite: the Kane who thunders nonsense on the rostrum is no less true to himself—may even be more so—than the Kane who marries an heiress or feathers a furtive love nest. We look in vain for the man behind the mask, because it fits him better than his own face. Rivette is one of the few directors to have taken this to heart, and pushed it further; his films are like intimate games played to unstated rules, and it is the characters, rather than the actors, who pronounce their lines as if they only just learned them last night.

Under these volatile conditions you can hardly expect motivation, the engine of traditional plots, to run with any smoothness. "Divertimento" nudges you with unexplained events. At dinner on the first night (a stiff occasion that softens into giggles, like a child's birthday party), there's suddenly a frightening thump of skull on wood: Frenhofer's friend Porbus has blacked out. Only Liz reacts; everyone else looks spaced-out and helpless. Later on, having recovered, Porbus suggests to Frenhofer that he use Marianne as a model. He agrees, as does Nicolas, but when Marianne finds out she turns on her heel and stomps off into the night; she has been traded between men like a marble statue, or a slave. Come morning, however, she arrives bright and early at Frenhofer's house, and before long she is easing off a robe and standing there before him wearing nothing but a look of defiance. Her change of heart is never explained, but you don't think of it as capitulation; if anything, she is taking the fight to the enemy. Just for a second, he gazes at her dumbstruck, but she outstares him, and he gathers his wits and turns to his sketchbook. She is ravishing, b[illegible] Frenhofer (like Rivette) is not in the business of being ravished. The game is on.

The object of the game is not art, I think, but power play—the tiny, often ridiculous transactions by which all of us, not just artists, seek the upper hand. "Turn around. . . . Stand up straight . . . as if you were stretched to the ceiling," Frenhofer commands. "It hurts," she complains. "That's good," he says, pressing on with the everyday cruelties of his trade. There are heart-freezing moments here as he pulls and straightens her reluctant limbs, like a murderer arranging a corpse for his fastidious pleasure. But, as the film progresses, the balance shifts: he may be forcing Marianne to her knees, but she is bending him to her needs, inspiring him to take up an old, unfinished painting, "La Belle Noiseuse," named after a courtesan of the seventeenth century—"a troublemaker," says Marianne, sensing a role model. Frenhofer resumes the masterpiece that never was (and never will be), covering an old image of Liz with a fresh one of Marianne. Soon she is the one who drags the easel to its place and pulls up the mattress on which she must recline. By now, there is nothing timid in her nudity—she looks coolly, fer[illegible]ciously free, and expects to be painted accordingly. "I count in this, too!" she exclaims when Frenhofer threatens to give up.

Like his heroine, Rivette is not concerned by artist's block, because he knows all too well that the world itself is never blocked—it spews ideas and setups all the time. That is why his movies mosey on so long, daring us to

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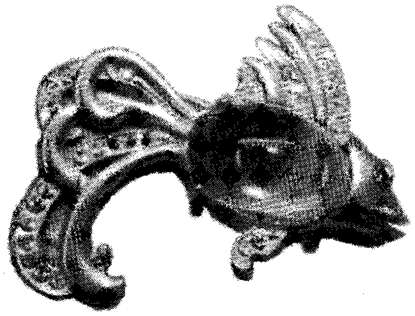

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nominate a conclusion. I once had a chance to see his 1971 film "Out 1," and spurned it, on the pathetic ground that I didn't have thirteen hours to spare. In a way, he is not asking very much of us—simply that we admit to the messiness of life; on the other hand, even four hours is asking a lot of most audiences, and there are good reasons to try "Divertimento" instead. For a start, the drawings and paintings (by the French artist Bernard Dufour, whose hand we see) don't really bear prolonged inspection; nor do they affect the substance of the film. Far from being rare or high-flown, it feels picky and downbeat; anyone who goes to French movies for a quick fix of artiness will come out grumbling. Yet there is no doubting Rivette's intelligence, or the calmness of his eye. The camera patiently circles Marianne, keeping its distance; sometimes it will begin a scene with a minute shift to one side, like Frenhofer seeking the perfect angle. For a film about scrutiny, there are remarkably few closeups; to Rivette, I suspect, they smack of emotional shorthand, which is not his style.

But one has to ask: Does "Divertimento" really deliver that style? For all its polish, doesn't it have a sweet tooth for gloom? Rivette was one of the leaders of the New Wave, with its sting and slap, and his best movies maintain an unyielding playfulness. "Céline and Julie Go Boating" (1974) has a high old time inside the labyrinth of memory: two young women visit a spooky house and relive the same story over and over, subtly deflecting it to their satisfaction. They are doing a Frenhofer, in other words, but the ritual solemnity is frilled with farce. Rivette may not thank me for the suggestion, but I think he should recut "La Belle Noiseuse" *again*, this time pointing it up as a comic roundelay. Less this time of Emmanuelle Béart, who strains the movie toward melodrama, and more of Jane Birkin, whose toothy blitheness makes it float. There are so many strands, after all, to be gathered up: we know that Porbus once loved Liz, who now loves Frenhofer, who depends on Marianne, who has offended Nicolas, who seems indecently pleased by the arrival, late in the movie, of his sister Julienne . . . The possibilities are rampant. Go for it, Jacques. Third time lucky. ♦

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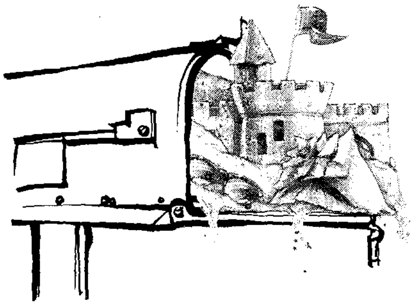

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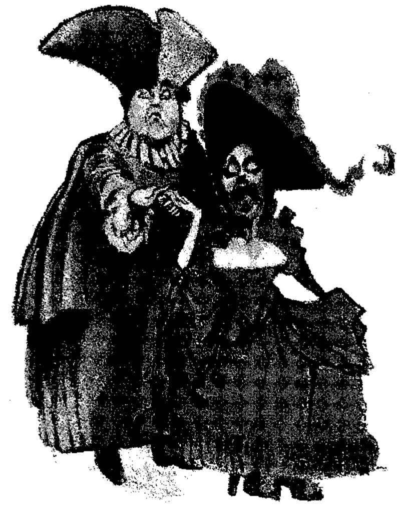
## MUSICAL EVENTS

# THE SANTA FE TRAIL

### BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

It would be handy if we could stop operatic characters and ask them what year they think they're in, but, no, they always glide on past us, singing in the middle distance. So we have to make our own guesses. Contemporary opera production has for a while been moving away from accepting the libretto as a true guide to the period in which we should see the action, except in a few obstinate cases; “Der Rosenkavalier,” for one, goes on guarding some secrets that might be revealed if anyone were to scratch its silver surface of Viennese rococo. To another charmed group of pieces we continue to grant the benefit, if that's what it is, of timelessness. “The Magic Flute” generally avoids being set in any particular age or country, as it did in Santa Fe this year, when the director, Reto Nickler, and the designer, Marie Anne Chiment, went for broad comedy, with the Three Ladies as dark-robed harpies, Sarastro and his followers in lurid scarlet and purple, and the white-furred Boys looking like Christmas-tree decorations.



*A feeling for Strauss: David Rampy and Erie Mills in “Capriccio.”*

ADRIANNE GILL

But Santa Fe also offered two productions—a Kurt Weill double bill of “The Protagonist” and “The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken” and Handel's “Xerxes”—in which, following a more general modern convention, the action was placed at the time of the music's composition. Such updating has an appealing logic. Western music—this is one of its most conspicuous and curious attributes—is marked by its time. If it's sung by characters who appear to belong in its own epoch, then a harmony between visual and musical design is guaranteed. As Jonathan Eaton, the director of the Weill pairing, remarked in the program book, the music of “The Protagonist” is in conflict with the work's ostensible Shakespearean setting: “Listening to this score, the ear does not lead the eye to see a rustic English inn of the year 1600.” One could argue that it might be interesting to try to stage the conflict, perhaps by suggesting a German Expressionist vision of Shakespearean England; the paintings of Max Beckmann might provide some pointers. However, Mr. Eaton's resituation of the piece in a dark twentieth-century basement, dominated by a huge boiler and piles of lumber (Robert Perdziola was the designer), had the virtue of directness. Besides, it worked.

With “The Protagonist” and its companion piece, “The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken,” we're dealing with the immediately prehistoric Weill. The two operas, both with librettos by Georg Kaiser, were written in 1924-25 and 1927, respectively; Weill's collaboration with Brecht began in the latter year, while he was at work on “The Tsar,” which he broke off in order to write the “Mahagonny Songspiel.” And yet the sensibility that we associate with the Brecht-Weill team—acrid, harsh, cynical, sleazy—is already there in both these one-acters. “The Protagonist” has the familiar strident wind tones, and the waltz and march rhythms, to which “The Tsar” adds a dash of twenties dance music. Both scores also have the pulse-impelled drive and the sense of separately spinning wheels in mechanisms gone slightly awry. All

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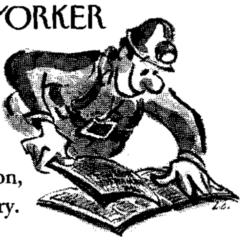

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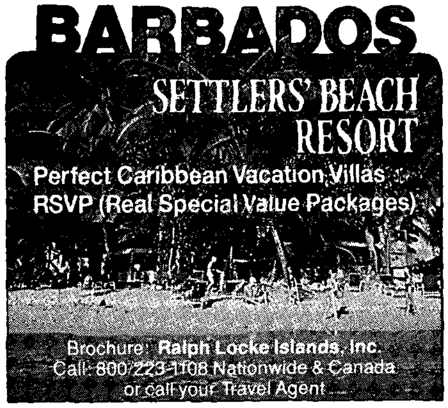

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that's missing is the popular-song style that Weill introduced in "Mahagonny," and some corresponding hard steel in the subject matter. Weill on the brink of becoming Weill sounds like Hindemith.

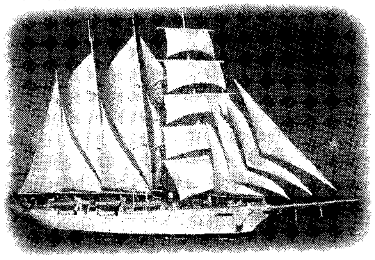
"The Protagonist" concerns a group of strolling players who arrive at an inn to prepare for a performance at a great house. What they first rehearse is a farce, concerning an adulterous wife, done in mime to spiky wind music from an octet onstage. (The Protagonist, the troupe's leader, specifically instructs that there be no pathos of cello music.) But then the order comes that their play must be a serious one, and so they begin a second rehearsal. Again they perform in mime, and again the subject is adultery, but the feeling now is sombrely tragic, and the previously excluded cello immediately takes a sinister lead in the accompanying music. The Protagonist's sister, who had left her brother in a state of gaiety after the first rehearsal, returns to introduce her new lover, and does not immediately notice that a different play is in rehearsal. The Protagonist, we are to understand, has always treasured his sister as a pure mirror to the real world. Now, caught up in the character of the wronged husband, he kills her.

"The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken" is a frolic about, well, a Tsar having his photograph taken. The lady photographer's studio has been commandeered by a group of terrorists, and the camera loaded with a pistol. When the Tsar enters, he falls for the substitute photographer, and asks if he can't take her picture first—a change of plan that she is understandably reluctant to approve. It's a slight joke to keep playing for three-quarters of an hour or so, but it was pepped up here by David Malis's puppyish enthusiasm as the Tsar, and by Mr. Perdziola's Art Deco designs. A curiosity of the piece is the introduction of a male chorus to comment on the action and sing the title: this production neatly had the men ranged across the top of the set, as if in their own dress circle. According to Weill, the chorus was his own idea, in which case he was a Brechtian before working with Brecht.

"The Tsar" was written to supply something to run with "The Protagonist," and the two works have various points of contact. Both have to do with private reality and public image. The Protagonist fatally confuses the two, whereas the Tsar strives to separate them in asking the photographer to see him as a man, not a monarch. Both take place in isolation from the larger world, which nevertheless impinges on the action. The Protagonist is the servant of masters we never see, and the Tsar, too, is in a sense a servant, of political responsibilities that he has sought to escape for a moment. Both men put their faith in a woman to show them their true selves, and both have to learn that they have thereby placed themselves in a false situation.

As its title suggests, "The Protagonist" is more overwhelmingly a vehicle for its central performer, and Jacque Trussel gave a vivid portrayal of genius on the edge. There was also beautiful orchestral playing, especially of the two substantial passages that accompany the mime plays; George Manahan was the conductor. If the performance failed to catch fire, the fault was in the material. There's not much in "The Protagonist" to persuade one that it's more than an arty remake of "Pagliacci," and both halves of the double bill are modish period pieces. Still, neither had received a professional staging in this country before, and one must applaud the Santa Fe Opera for its continuing commitment to expanding the repertory, even if this particular effort was more worthy than revelatory.

The Handel production, directed by Stephen Wadsworth, was an essay in dramatic photo-realism. Thomas Lynch's set provided a close view of a house that might have been in eighteenth-century Virginia, with a long brick garden wall and a functioning upper story. There were plenty of places for the characters to be, and Mr. Wadsworth gave them plenty to do: the opera unfolded as if it were part of the life of a bourgeois household, the tangled loves of the gentry interspersed with episodes of folding sheets or barrowing produce. This might have suited the autumnal, fond feeling of "Xerxes" had Mr. Wadsworth not lost faith in his audience's ability to keep patience through three long acts. To have the characters introduce themselves before the overture was only crass; to vulgarize their language and behavior was to destroy the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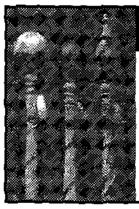
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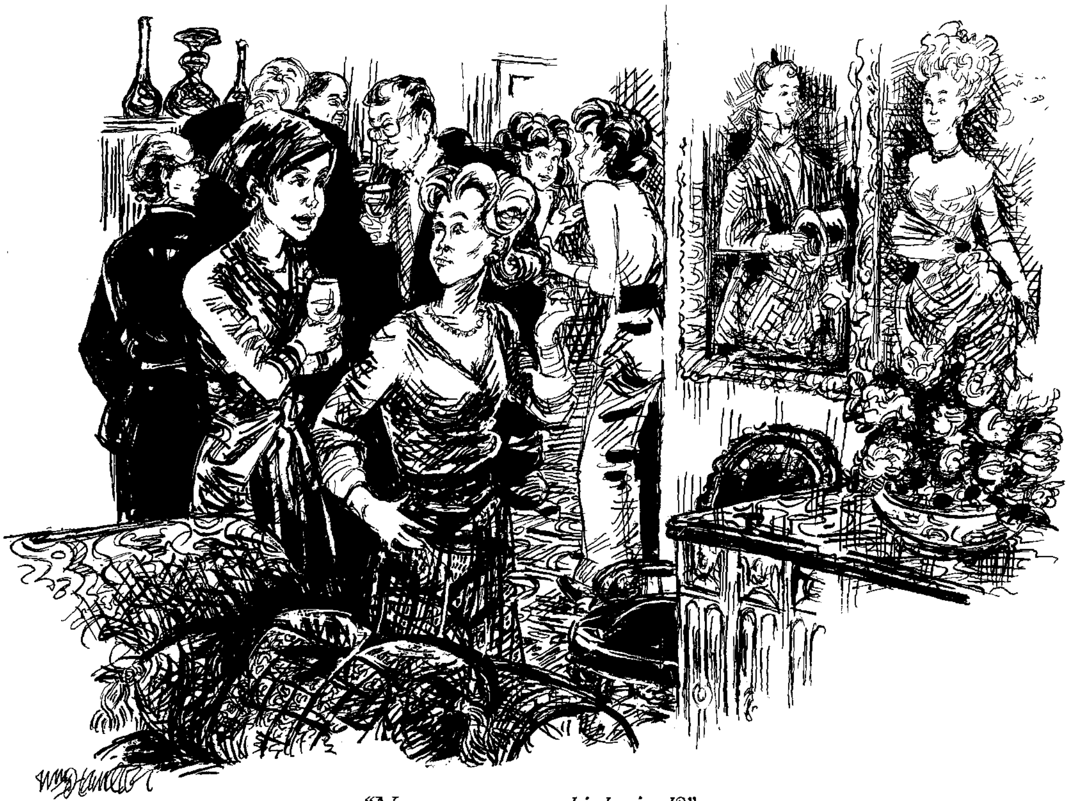

*"Neat ancestors—biological?"*

difference—the difference of strangeness—that makes Handel worth performing.

Under these circumstances, a promising cast was caught between playing for laughs and singing for wonder. There was also the problem of a stodgy, unsympathetic orchestral performance. At a time when recordings are showing the virtues of an airy, singer-centered style in Handel, the old square rhythm is hard to support, and must be hard to sing to. Frederica von Stade in the title role had as much tarnish as shine in her voice, and Dawn Upshaw as Romilda was below form, though Erie Mills kept up the fighting spirit to send herself through Atalanta's virtuoso music. The one who came off best was Kevin Langan's noble Ariodate, who could stand at an amused distance from the others.

Santa Fe is a funny place. The presence of "Xerxes" and of the Weill double bill in this year's schedule indicates a sophisticated taste, and, of course, the company has made its reputation partly for its exploration of rare repertory: the operas of Cavalli and of Hans Werner Henze, and, most recently, works by the younger generation of European composers, including Wolfgang Rihm, Hans-Jürgen von Bose, and Judith Weir (whose third full-length opera, "Blond Eckbert," will be performed at next year's festival, soon after its London première). But the "Xerxes" production and the crude, unmagical "Magic Flute" were simple-minded and tedious, almost as if this were any second-rate provincial company. Only the quality of the casts argued otherwise. "The Magic Flute" brought the welcome return of an ex-Santa Fe protégé, Kurt Streit, to counter the production with freshness, immediacy, and elegance as Tamino. A revival of "La Bohème" was distinguished by Martin Thompson as Rodolfo, and by the exceptionally sensitive conducting of John Keenan.

Of the company's four new productions this year, the most successful was Strauss's "Capriccio," which is an old favorite here (Santa Fe gave the work its American professional première, in 1958, when the company was in its second year), and was once again conducted by John Crosby, who has run the festival from the beginning. Mr. Crosby's affection for Strauss is well known, and, perhaps because this is a score about Strauss's affection for Strauss, the result was radiant and luscious and right. There are places in "Capriccio" where one wonders whether the orchestra is still listening to what the people onstage are singing about, or whether it hasn't gone off on a smiling nostalgic rhapsody all its own. The purpose of the libretto seems to have been to enable Strauss to revisit the musical-dramatic sites of earlier triumphs and then simply to go on writing music, pouring it out from a jug that stays brimful. In the last moments, the revisiting and the pouring are going on at once, since what's being remembered is the similarly extended conclusion of "Der Rosenkavalier," and all Strauss's efforts are to keep the music coming, as if the final silence could be put off forever. Mr. Crosby and his players lavished care on these closing pages, and maintained the serene elevation they'd reached at the beginning of the scene. Sheri Greenawald, the Countess, brought her gracious performance to its apex.

Willy Decker's production was with them in spirit. This is a work that has responded to updating, but Mr. Decker put the characters back in the eighteenth century they discourse about, while placing them also in the ahistorical limbo in which the score loves to linger. The wigs, breeches, and panniered skirts were almost all in tones of white, against a neutral interior painted in brilliant blue. In the first half, there were various items of furniture and a miniature theatre for the entertainments, but by the end these had all been put away, to leave the people drifting as clouds in an empyrean of beautiful inconsequentiality. ♦

WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE DEPT.

[*From the Los Angeles Times*]

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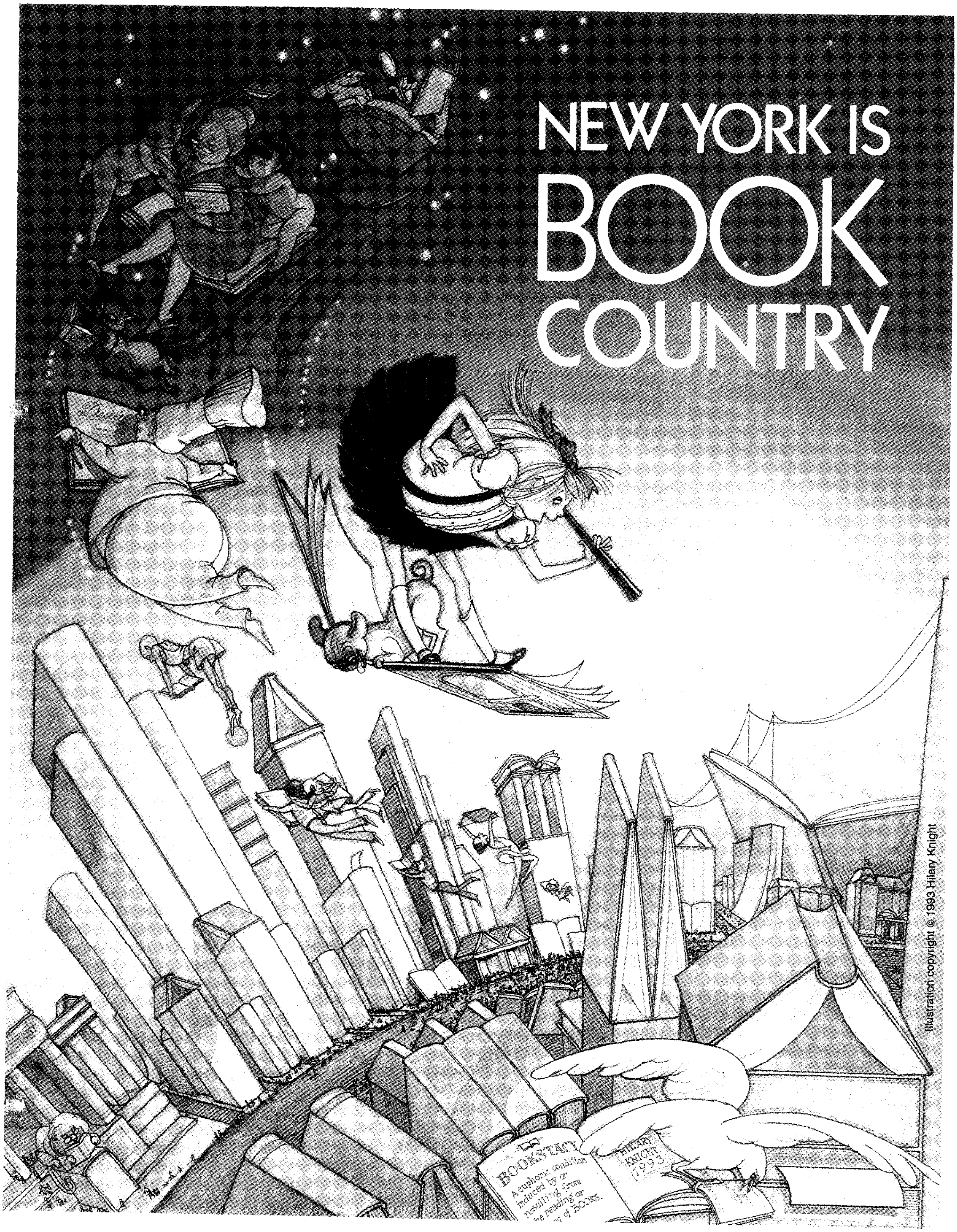
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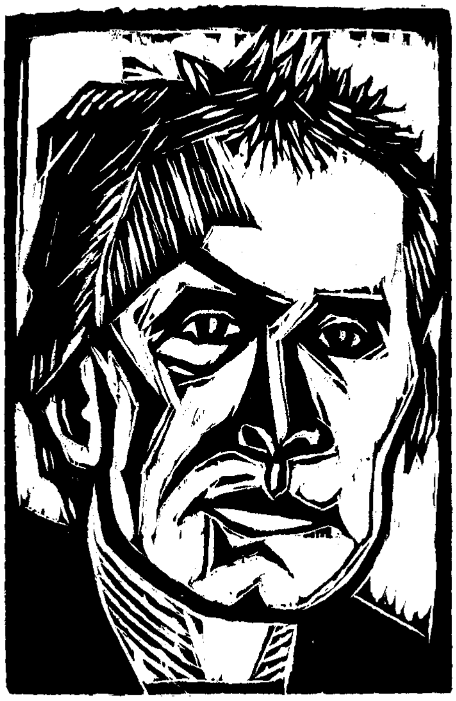
## BOOKS

# NORTHERN LIGHT

### BY FERNANDA EBERSTADT



*Peter Hoeg: Closer to Conrad than to Clancy.*

MARGIE GREVE

IN one of the most uncanny passages in Peter Hoeg's new novel, "Smilla's Sense of Snow" (translated from the Danish by Tiina Nunnally; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $21), Smilla Qaavigaaq Jaspersen, a Greenlander, looks back thirty-odd years to her first experience of alienation from the world in which she was reared. In the early sixties, Smilla, then about five years old, is with her mother, an Inuit hunter, in their summer Arctic encampment, where they have just caught eight narwhals that were trapped in the ice, including a pregnant female, who, when slit open, disgorges "an angel-white, perfectly formed pup." Later, hunting auks, the child nets three of the birds. At the moment when she is supposed to kill them, however, Smilla, seeing in her mind the white whale calf, instead opens the net, and, "with a great explosion of sound, the birds rise into the air." Her mother looks at the little girl thoughtfully. " 'Smilla,' she says, 'I have carried you in *amaat*.' . . . 'And yet,' she says, 'I am as strong as a man.' " And then the mother, a big, gorgeous woman, as brown as varnish, unbuttons her red-and-black checked shirt:

> She never kisses me, and she seldom touches me. But at moments of great intimacy, she lets me drink from the milk that is always there, beneath her skin, just as her blood is. She spreads her legs so I can come between them. Like the other hunters, she wears pants made of bearskin given only a rudimentary tanning. She loves ashes, sometimes eating them straight from the fire, and she has smeared some underneath her eyes. In this aroma of burned coal and bearskin, I go to her breast, which is brilliantly white, with a big, delicate rose aureole. There I drink *immuk*, my mother's milk.

The child Smilla understands perfectly what her mother then tells her about the unnourishing extremes of the Arctic environment, in which, from one month to the next, three thousand narwhals freeze to death and half a million auks starve. Such narrow margins of survival leave no room for squeamishness. In North Greenland, empathy becomes "a kind of insensitivity."

But Smilla's very patrimony condemns her to an outsider's self-consciousness—a plight that Hoeg, a Dane, continually explores in the book. Smilla's mother is a Greenlandic Inuit who has been hunting to feed her family since her own father started to go blind, when she was twelve, but Smilla's father, living in Copenhagen, is a "European"—a world-famous anesthesiologist with a taste for yachts and international golf tournaments. When, a few years after the auk episode, her mother disappears on a hunting trip, Smilla is shipped south and inducted rather brutally into the process by which the Danish colonial administration converts Greenlanders into Danes. Although Smilla runs away repeatedly, each time heading home for Greenland, her eventual manner of expressing her Inuit passion for ice and snow is a peculiarly European one. The grown Smilla who narrates this story, a prickly thirty-seven-year-old spinster of independent means, has become a glacial morphologist, living in Copenhagen and returning to North Greenland—now dominated by a Danish military presence—only on scientific missions. As Smilla concludes her recollection of the auk hunt, she reflects that even as a child she had begun to separate herself from the extreme environs in which her mother ranged so majestically. And even then she had begun to want to understand them: "To want to understand is an attempt to recapture something we have lost."

"Smilla's Sense of Snow" is, among other things, a book about loss—about the scarred, fractious, and inventive ways we fight to master exile and to survive the loss of parents, and the ways we batter ourselves against unyielding human institutions. It is a book of profound intelligence and an equally profound grief. Throughout the story, Smilla yearns for ice and snow, for mother's milk.

The book opens with the funeral of the grown Smilla's Copenhagen neighbor Isaiah, an Inuit child who—in a mirror image of Smilla's own history—has been packed south, after his father perishes on a 1991 Arctic expedition, to live with his alcoholic mother. Isaiah is recalled as an enormously humorous, self-contained, worldly-wise kindergartner, who liked Smilla to read aloud to him from Euclid's "Elements." He has died as a result of falling off a snowy roof. What puzzles Smilla is that Isaiah suffered from a fear of heights so paralyzing that he would break out in a cold sweat if he was forced higher than the second floor. Smilla's investigation into why Isaiah ended up dead is the engine that drives the story, leading us into an underworld of drug smugglers and unscrupulous scientists whose operations reach from Indochina to the Arctic.

Hoeg's two previous works—a novel and a collection of short stories—have won him a reputation in Denmark as a serious writer. But "Smilla's Sense of Snow" is, in its peculiar way, a thriller. Or, more precisely, a hybrid combining the plot and the special effects of a thriller—murder, drugs, conspiracy, and rough sex—with all the attributes of a literary novel: complex characters, exquisite language, and an authorial intelligence keen to explore the most far-reaching questions of science, national destiny, and the nature of individual responsibility. The result reads almost like two separate books. The first half is a work of literature, adept at juxtaposing Inuit creation myth and a Brahms violin concerto, subtle in its revelation of culture through character, and character through gesture and memory, and deliberately syncopated in the rhythm of those revelations. (The American translation apparently got too smooth for the author's liking; the British version, published by Harvill, follows Hoeg's corrections and is more emphatic in its sentence structures.)

The second half of the book is the unfolding of the adventure story, in which Smilla, disguised as a stewardess, sets sail on a four-thousand-ton cargo ship manned by ex-convicts and headed for a top-secret mission off the coast of Greenland. But even as one is plunged into this tale of mystery on the high seas one is aware that it has been composed by an author more in the league of Melville or Conrad than in that of Tom Clancy. Hoeg writes prose that is as bitter, changeable, and deep-fathomed as poetry—prose that (even in translation) demands to be read aloud and savored. He writes with a sensualist's appetite for weather, light, food, clothing. The primal stuff of this novel, of course, is snow and ice, which Hoeg conjures up in all its varieties—frazil ice, grease ice, pancake, porridge, field ice—with the relish of Richard Burton anatomizing melancholy. But he also shows a meticulous and exacting respect for denser substances. When Smilla describes someone as "doughlike," she means not simply that the man is stolid but that he is "elastic, unspoiled, simple, and yet sophisticated" and, "at the same time, much too soft."

Hoeg's heroine is didactic by temperament. One of the advantages of a thriller is that it can get away with telling the reader more than he would usually stand for about glacial formation or Newton's ideas on Absolute Space or the stretch capacity of nylon hawsers—all of which Smilla does. But Smilla is a passionate moralist, whose scientific speculations serve as rather acid parables about human conduct. The book's overriding moral subject is the chasm between the "European" (I think Americans would broaden this to "Western") mentality, with its fidgetiness, its hunger to calculate, talk, acquire, classify, change, and control, and the Greenlanders' hunter virtues of silence, watchfulness, and conservation of strength—also, patience and a "short, short path to ecstasy."

This chasm, in Smilla's estimation, has proved unbridgeable. When Greenland was incorporated into Denmark, in the nineteen-fifties, Greenlandic Inuits, according to Smilla, were shunted into barracks and reincarnated as "Northern Danes." After the advent of a limited Home Rule, in 1979, Smilla says, the Danish government and its trading company closed shop, putting legions of Inuits out of work. Smilla, who patrols the border between the colonizer and the colonized, observes:

> Not one day of my adult life has passed that I haven't been amazed at how poorly Danes and Greenlanders understand each other. It's worse for Greenlanders, of course. It's not healthy for the tightrope walker to be misunderstood by the person who's holding the rope. And in this century the Inuit's life has been a tightrope dance on a cord fastened on one end to the world's least hospitable land with the world's most severe and fluctuating climate, and fastened on the other end to the Danish colonial administration.

But she is also sufficiently conscientious to quote an eighty-five-year-old Inuit who "had experienced the entire modern colonization process, moving from the Stone Age to the radio," and concludes that life is better today, since "the Inuit very rarely die of hunger nowadays."

It is part of the persuasiveness of this edgy, skillful, moralizing book, with its heartbreakingly vivid heroine (the author is subsumed in the narrator to the point where readers will catch themselves referring to Peter Hoeg as "she"), that not only does it make us crave icebound harbors, fog, and darkness at noon but, at its sharpest moments, the descriptions seem to have emerged from the absolute silence of the unwritten North they evoke. This true pitch, rather than the book's penchant for adventure, is what keeps the reader riveted, and that makes me hope that Hoeg will now go back to turning out the kind of novels that readers who live by language sit and wait for. When Hoeg writes about drug smuggling, you feel as if you were hearing Gidon Kremer play bluegrass. It's an odd kind of luxury, but you don't necessarily hope to hear him do it more than once. ◆

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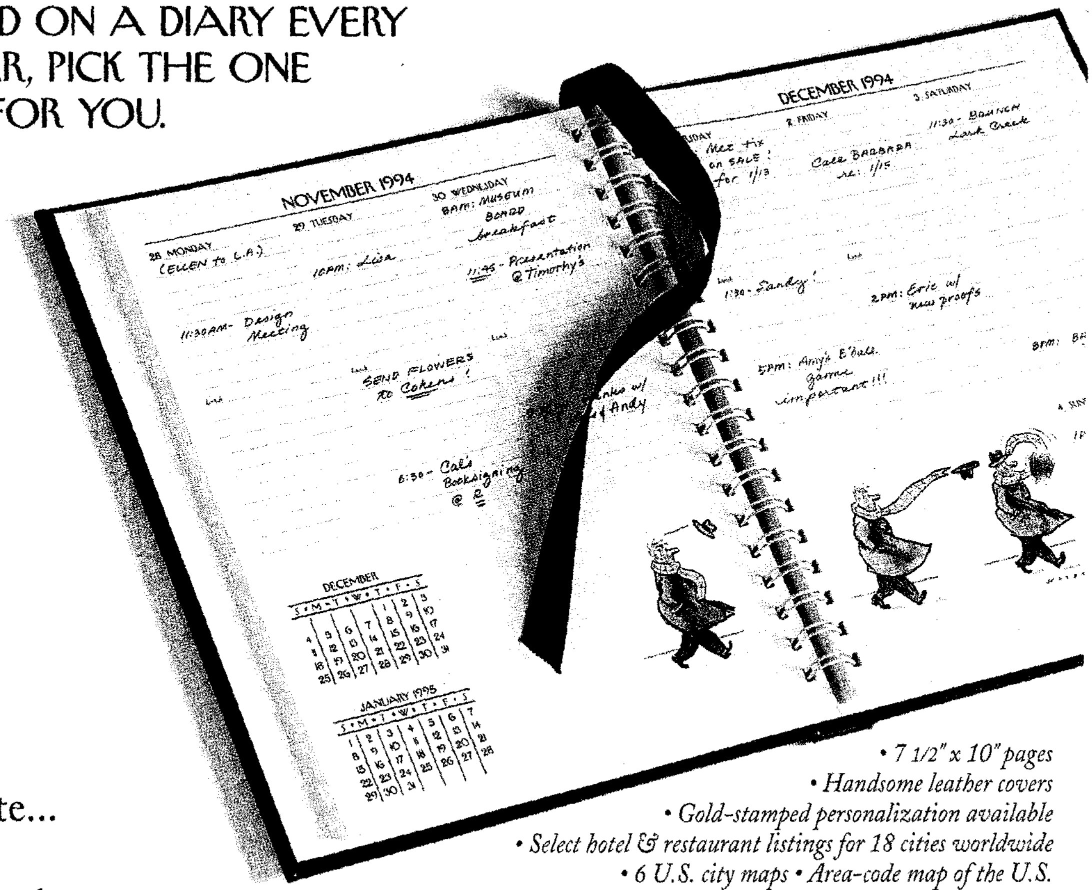
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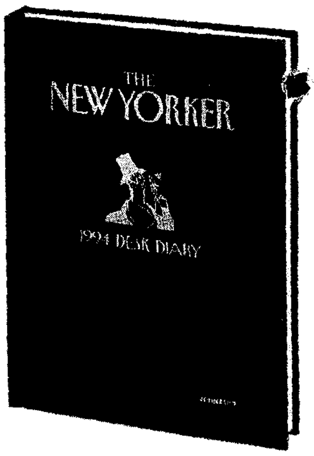
THE NEW YORKER
1994 DESK DIARY

BOOKS

# WILLIE'S VERSION

BY LOUIS MENAND

THE true character of its readership is a mystery not every magazine necessarily wishes to plumb. In the winter of 1971, I was living in Berkeley, California, sharing an apartment above a coffee shop with a friend who'd been kicked out of the secondary school we'd attended and an older woman he had persuaded to come to California with him. The furnishings consisted of two water beds, a coffee table, and a stereo; the distinctive design feature remarked on by visitors was the complete absence of chairs. Our wardrobe was informal, and we got a lot of use out of it; we drank, but we were not brand conscious; we did not have a car. Our belief system is easily summarized: we were contemptuous of authority; we were contemptuous of the enemies of authority. If we had had an ounce of self-understanding, we would probably have been contemptuous of ourselves. We were, in short, eighteen-year-old experts on life—college sophomores, the very bottom of the middle-class barrel.

In March, we pooled resources to purchase the issue of *Harper's* containing Norman Mailer's book-length attack on the women's-liberation movement, "The Prisoner of Sex" (which we judged, naturally, to be an outstanding piece of writing). That issue of *Harper's* sold more copies off the newsstand than any other issue in the magazine's history. It was also the last issue to be edited by Willie Morris, who resigned shortly after it appeared. The owners had lost faith, they told him, in the magazine's readership. If any significant number of *Harper's* readers in 1971 matched the demographic profile of my friend and me, I'd say the owners were right. In the magazine business, you do not want to be telling advertisers that you can deliver a couple of teen-age sociophobes living over a coffee shop on Telegraph Avenue.

The truth is, of course, that magazines like *Harper's* are read by teen-age sociophobes—and by retired curmudgeons, amateur grammarians, graduate students, unpublished writers, published writers, guys between jobs, and other assorted deadbeats. These people generally cannot afford and do not feel any particular peer pressure to possess the designer clothing, luxury cars, and expensive liquor advertised in the pages of such magazines. On the other hand, they do read the articles. The trick, if you run one of those magazines, is to get lots of other people—including people who might actually be in the market for Versace evening wear or a Lincoln Mark VIII—to decide that, if they did have time to read magazine articles, the articles in your magazine are the ones they would read. How this happens—how a magazine goes the crucial distance from being merely read to being talked about—is a puzzle with many pieces, one of which can sometimes be sheer editorial brio.

By every account, including his own, which is now available in "New York Days" (Little, Brown; $24.95), Willie Morris had a lot of editorial brio. He was born in Yazoo City, Mississippi, and attended the University of Texas, where, as the editor of the student paper, he achieved some national prominence after a run-in with university administrators about editorial policy. He went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar; when he

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*"And are you the plaintiff or the defendant?"*

• •

got back, in 1960, he joined the *Texas Observer*, a local muckraking journal, and soon became its editor. In 1963, he left for New York and *Harper's*. Four years later, he was made editor-in-chief; he was only thirty-two. In the same year, he published a memoir, "North Toward Home," which won prizes and became a best-seller. "New York Days" retraces some of the ground covered in that earlier book, then brings the story up to "The Prisoner of Sex," and beyond. After his resignation, Morris abandoned the city, first for Long Island and then, in 1980, for Mississippi, where he now lives. He tells us he has not picked up an issue of *Harper's* since 1971.

Morris's ambition when he took over *Harper's* was to attract younger readers. In 1967, this meant giving the appearance of taking on the establishment; and since *Harper's*, which is the oldest continuously published monthly magazine in the country, was itself an establishment fixture, Morris faced the clear risk that his older readers would all jump ship before the younger ones had been safely brought on board—which is, in the end, pretty much what happened. But he did manage, before the curtain fell, to put together four years' worth of issues that struck a decent balance between iconoclasm and respectability, and of which he is unabashedly, and justifiably, proud.

Morris wasn't, as his book rather starkly reveals, even remotely antiestablishment himself. He believed, as a journalist, in innovation, provocation, digging for dirt; but he also appears to have been the sort of person who gets slightly dizzy in the presence of the powerful and the famous. He didn't take drugs in the sixties; he went to lunch at the Century Club—an experience he writes about, even now, in a kind of swoon. "What act, pray tell," he exclaims at one point, "could follow steak tartare and a fried egg on top with *Ralph Bunche*?" This is not the voice of the counterculture.

Since being the editor of a national magazine throws a person into frequent—not to say occasionally unsought-after—contact with the powerful and the famous, Morris spent four years, as he now remembers it, in a delirium of close encounters, and many pages of "New York Days" are taken up with the business of recalling them. These stories have approximately the interest of an autograph collection, and the reason is that the famous people in them all look and behave exactly the way they are famous for looking and behaving. Of Bobby Kennedy, Morris writes: "I was surprised to see how shy he was, with a private half-disguised vulnerability. . . . I sensed a hidden pain and sorrow in his eyes a world removed from the casual and friendly talk." Of Howard Cosell: "He talked . . . in unravelling rhetorical rhythms, a spiked Brooklyn nasal at once abrasive and magisterial." Of Bernard Malamud: "For all appearances more like a successful Upper West Side Jewish merchant than a writer of moving tales of dispossession and distress." Gore Vidal is caustic; Truman Capote gossips; Norman Mailer shadowboxes. Ali MacGraw has "perfect legs just as I remembered them from 'Goodbye, Columbus.' " Bill Bradley, we learn, "was tall."

At first one assumes that Morris has, over the years, lost the memory of the actual details of these encounters, and so has had to reconstruct what it must have been like when he chatted with Bobby Kennedy or Howard Cosell. Then one begins to suspect that the descriptions are probably accurate enough: most of these people, finding themselves face to face with the editor of a magazine for which they might write or in which they might be written about, would naturally have been anxious to present the well-known images of themselves that they had cultivated for precisely such occasions. These encounters were not personal, in other words; they were business. Whether Morris grasped this or not, he clearly didn't mind. The more Truman Capote carried on like Truman Capote, the faster his heart pounded.

Morris's account of his relations with *Harper's* presents a different problem. In "North Toward Home," the memoir he published in 1967, Morris explains that in the early sixties he and his wife "lived for a brief spell in California . . . in a suburban nightmare called Palo Alto, taking graduate courses at Stanford until the money ran out." He adds, "The campus itself . . . always reminded me of a high-class prison." Leaving his family behind, he sets off on a Greyhound bus for Manhattan, where, after spending the night with a friend, he goes out in the morning "to find a job." He visits a book editor (unnamed, but, from his description, easily identifiable to people in the business) to ask about work, but he is snubbed; he drops by the *Times*, where he's put off with vague talk about an assignment to a bureau, as yet unopened, in Dallas. The next day, he keeps a lunch appointment with the editor of *Harper's*, who asks "abruptly" whether he'd like a job there. He shows up for work several days later, only to find that no office is available for him; he has to camp out in the hallway and then in a linen closet until something opens up. In short, country boy comes to Gotham.

In the new book, Morris is having breakfast in Austin one morning in 1962 when a letter arrives from the editor of *Harper's*, who writes, "Quite frankly I'm looking around for a successor. I don't know if you're the man, but I have a hunch you are. . . . You could try it up here for a while and see what you think." Morris has already been offered a position at the *Times*, but he decides to take the *Harper's* job instead. His wife, however, has just been awarded a Woodrow Wilson fellowship to do graduate work at Stanford, so he phones *Harper's* and is told he can join the magazine in three months or so. He goes off to Stanford—"my sojourn at golden Stanford," he calls it—and, after a few idyllic months spent reading back issues of *Harper's* in the library's "herbaceous courtyard," he hops a bus (it's still a Greyhound) for New York and shows up for work. He's given the office formerly occupied by Robert Silvers, who has recently left to start *The New York Review of Books*. In short, golden youth is tapped for greatness.

Now, a man is entitled to his memoirs. If Morris remembers meeting Howard Cosell, before one of his appearances on Cosell's ABC radio show, at "the ABC Building, called 'Black Rock,' on Sixth Avenue," he's probably just conflating two events, since Black Rock is the CBS Building. If he recalls hearing from his apartment, which was at Ninety-fourth Street and West End Avenue, "the sounds of rampage at Columbia up the way, of loudspeakers and massed angry voices," he is only telling us that he lived reasonably close to a place where a famous sixties event occurred, since Ninety-fourth and West End is separated from Columbia by more than a mile's worth of massive apartment buildings. If he suggests that he saw Woody Allen walking into Elaine's with Mia Farrow around 1971, when Mia Farrow was still married to André Previn, he's just remembering that Woody Allen ate at Elaine's in the same period he did.

But if Morris says in one book that he was offered a job at *Harper's* unexpectedly over lunch in New York and says in another book, twenty-six years later, that the job was offered and accepted long before he arrived in the city, something more than a lapse of years is required to account for the discrepancy. You would have to conclude that in 1967 Morris bet, correctly, that readers would enjoy a tale of a young man from the Deep South taking on Manhattan single-handed, and that in 1993 Morris is betting that readers will be more entertained by a tale of merit and entitlement. But it's hard to see how both versions can be true.

On the other hand, who cares? The memoirs of literary people are traditionally so unreliable that to call them "self-serving" is nearly a redundancy. Just as long as nobody mistakes them for history. Morris's *Harper's*, though, *is* history, and when he leaves off reminiscing about the lunches at the Century and the parties at George Plimpton's he does manage to give us some idea of what being an editor was like back in the days when journalism was New.

MORRIS'S first move after taking over *Harper's* was to hire a stable of writers and let them write. This is a method that's often tried in the magazine business but works only when the editor and the writers genuinely share a journalistic sensibility—when there is a kind of intuitive understanding between them about what's worth writing about. It can't be a top-down arrangement. Morris obviously understood the dynamic: he hired two writers who shared his own Southern background, Larry L. King and Marshall Frady, and two newspapermen who shared his taste for hard reporting, John Corry and David Halberstam; he fraternized with them

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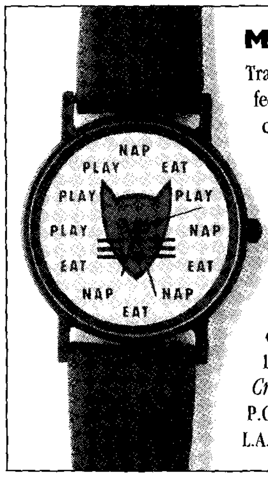

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(rather a lot, it appears) when they were in town; and he sent them wherever they wanted to go.

Then he went shopping for blockbusters. He bought forty-five thousand words of William Styron's "The Confessions of Nat Turner," and ninety thousand words of Mailer's "The Armies of the Night"; both books later won Pulitzer Prizes. He commissioned "The Prisoner of Sex." He sent Mailer to the 1968 Democratic and Republican Conventions; he sent Bill Moyers on a bus trip across America; he sent Alfred Kazin to Israel to cover the 1967 war. He published excerpts from Norman Podhoretz's "Making It," from Gay Talese's book on the *Times*, "The Kingdom and the Power," from Joe McGinniss's "The Selling of the President, 1968," and he ran much of the material that became "The Best and the Brightest." In May, 1970, he published Seymour Hersh's report on the massacre at My Lai. (Hersh, too, won a Pulitzer.)

It's an impressive record, but it was a very fast track. In a sense, Morris was just keeping up with the competition. Much of what he was trying to do at *Harper's*—making magazine journalism more gritty and, at the same time, more literary—was already being done (as he freely acknowledges) at *Esquire*, under the editorship of Harold Hayes. It is at *Esquire* that the New Journalism is supposed to have been born, on the night Tom Wolfe couldn't meet his deadline and was told just to type up his notes, which were run without changes. By 1968, *Esquire* had gone so far in a literary direction that one of the writers Hayes sent to Chicago to cover the riots at the Democratic National Convention was Jean Genet, who filed a story that makes Norman Mailer sound like R. W. Apple. ("The thighs are very beautiful beneath the blue cloth, thick and muscular. It all must be hard. This policeman is also a boxer, a wrestler. His legs are long, and perhaps, as you approach his member, you would find a furry nest of long, tight, curly hair.")

Wolfe was also writing for the *Herald Tribune's* Sunday magazine, which was edited by Clay Felker and became *New York* magazine when the *Herald Tribune* folded. Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne were writing for *The Saturday Evening Post*. *The New Yorker* had perfected its own style of literary reportage long before, and it ran Jonathan Schell's report on the destruction of the Vietnamese village of Ben Suc almost three years before Hersh's story on My Lai. In 1963, *The New York Review of Books* began appearing; in 1967, *Rolling Stone* and Ted Solotaroff's *New American Review* started up. *Ramparts*, founded in 1962 as a magazine for advocates of reform in the Catholic Church, was taken over by its editor, Warren Hinckle III, a former public-relations man, and became a slick New Left muckraker instead. Some of Garry Wills' "Nixon Agonistes" was originally written for *Esquire* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. Mailer's "Of a Fire on the Moon" was commissioned by *Life*. It was truly the

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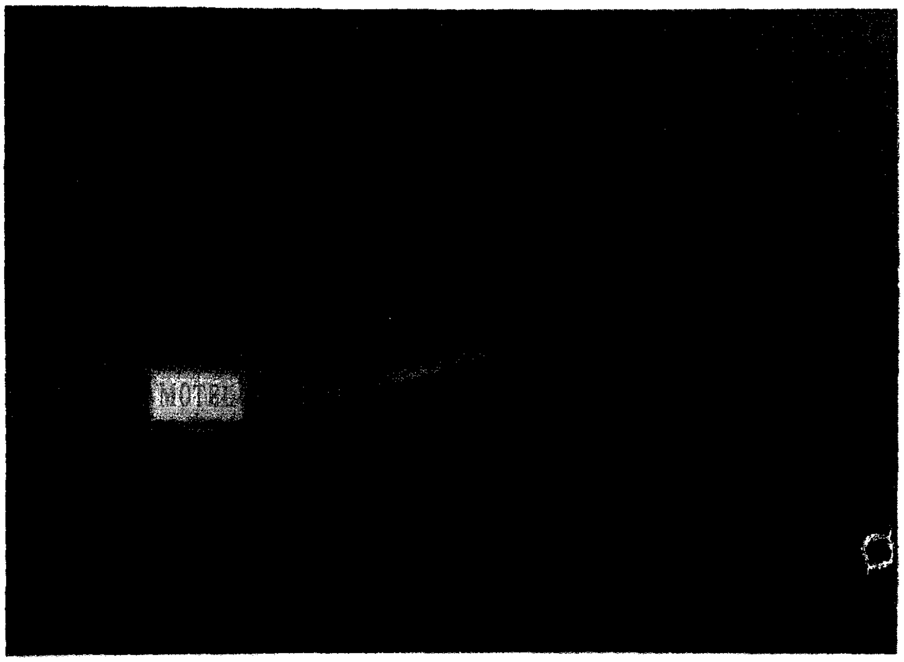
## PORTFOLIO BY VITALY KOMAR AND ALEXANDER MELAMID

# STALIN IN JERSEY

IN their past several shows, the Soviet-American artist team of Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid—late of Moscow, more recently of SoHo, New York, and Bayonne, New Jersey—seemed to be caroming randomly between post-Soviet and latter-day American themes, wickedly skewering Stalin's Socialist Realist iconography one season, for example, and then applying its stolid tenets to the vast American workscape the next, as in their remarkable half-serious homage to the metal-casters at the Bergen Point Brass Foundry, in Bayonne. With their current exhibition, at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, in SoHo (running through October 16th), they seem to be back in America again—a decidedly darkened America this time, in the grip of recession. (Their beloved Bergen Point Brass Foundry has been forced to cut back radically both on its production and on its workforce.) Such, at any rate, would seem to be the subtext of the unsettling five-panel series reproduced here, "Suite in Chrome Yellow," in which the artists allow themselves to envision (through ostentatious art-historical references to everyone from Giorgione to Titian, Caravaggio, and Ingres) the mysterious suicide of a lonely guest in a New Jersey motel. "An anonymous American man" is how the gallery's press release succinctly characterizes the victim. Maybe so. Only, look again: a quarter turn of the karmic screw, a half turn of the century (Stalin died, supposedly of a stroke, in March, 1953) and, on second thought, he doesn't look anonymous at all. —LAWRENCE WESCHLER



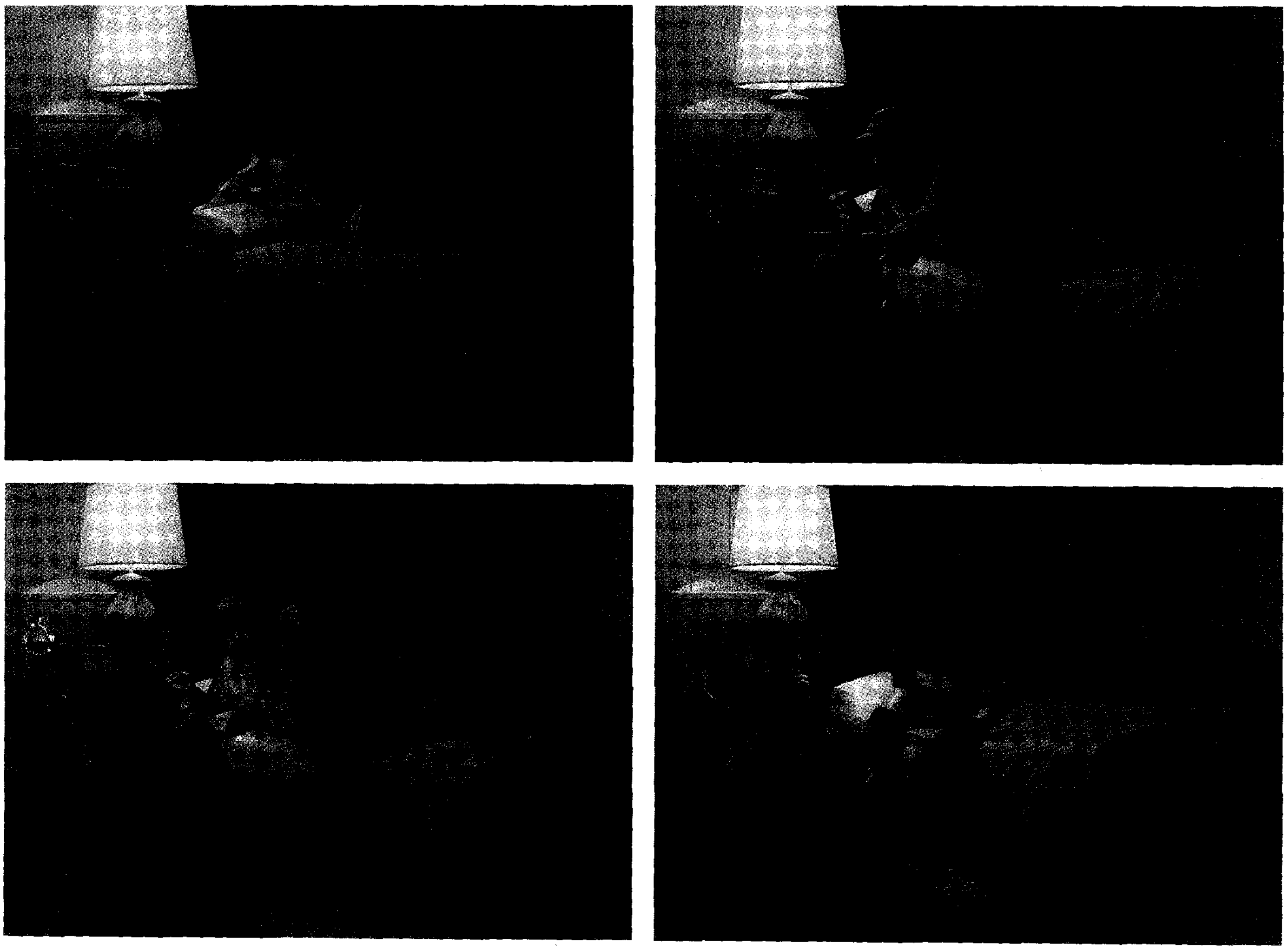
golden age: when William F. Buckley called Gore Vidal a queer, he did it on national television. (Buckley later apologized, at impressive length, in *Esquire.*) Writers in the sixties were part of the entertainment.

What caused this shrub to bloom? The simplest answer is that things were happening too fast to be covered by books, which take a long time to produce, and were too sexy or ideologically charged to be covered decently by television, which (thanks to the networks' untiring efforts to hang on to their broadcast monopolies by offending no one) was still terrified by controversy. Magazines were the best way to keep up, and this made literary journalists into cultural mini-stars.

A more speculative answer, suggested by Morris Dickstein in his book on the sixties, is that American journalism abandoned its traditional anti-intellectualism and philistinism in response to some kind of unexplained leavening in the culture at large. The demand for genuine thought in the general-interest magazines pulled serious writers away from the quarterlies and toward the dollars: Willie Morris didn't pay much at *Harper's*, but he probably paid more than *Partisan Review*, and he was happy to get Irving Howe as his chief literary critic and John Hollander as his poetry editor. There existed, for a few years, an American literary culture that managed to be both reasonably popular and reasonably intellectual. It's hard to imagine any time before or since when a magazine like *The New York Review of Books* could have been invented.

This is to say nothing, of course, about the quality of the writing. Some of it is classic because it's great writing: Didion's essays collected in "Slouching Towards Bethlehem" and Renata Adler's essays collected in "Toward a Radical Middle"; Jane Kramer's *New Yorker* Profile of Allen Ginsberg; "Superman Comes to the Supermarket," Mailer's report for *Esquire* on the 1960 Democratic Convention; "Nixon Agonistes." Some of it is classic because it has acquired academic status of one kind or another. Much of Wolfe's writing on popular culture, for example, reads now as pure manner, but it's canonical, because it's New. Similarly, "The Armies of the Night," which is so wonderfully mordant as a portrait of the antiwar movement, is now admired for all the wrong reasons: Mailer has nothing especially interesting to say in that book about either the war in Vietnam or "the novel as history." And "The Prisoner of Sex," despite the early enthusiasm of certain sophomores, is Mailer at his metaphysical worst. When you look at it again in *Harper's*, with the accompanying art—René Schumacher's "Girl Game," models of pinball and slot machines designed to resemble naked women—you're struck by how distant 1971 really is. (Still, it's not as startling or as distasteful as Joseph Epstein's pained consideration of homosexuality, "Homo/Hetero: The Struggle for Sexual Identity," which Morris ran in the issue of September, 1970.)

In fact, there's something a little for-



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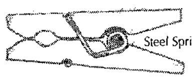

eign about all this writing, from the pieces people still read today to the mass of forgotten stuff about heavyweight fights and soul food and the generation gap. It's not that the prose seems hyperventilated and purplish. It seemed hyperventilated and purplish then, too. It's that it's so *portentous*. An encounter with the most trivial bit of Americana becomes an opportunity for the writer to work himself up into a meditation on the national destiny. Nothing is banal, or simply what it is; everything is eschatological. One of the pieces Morris says he particularly admires of those he published at *Harper's* was an article called "The Land of the Permanent Wave," by a Texas writer named Edwin Shrake. The title refers to a hairdo. This sociological mysticism is what Didion was describing when she named her seventies collection after one of the great cabalas of the time, "The White Album": all signs are taken for wonders.

This is exactly the style of "New York Days"—inflated to encompass the cosmic. A sample:

> I had lived in the city now for more than five years, had shared its ceaseless quests and extravagances, and I had grown to feel that it was in truth both our city state *and* America done large, that far from being an aberration from the national life the city was if anything the crux and apogee of our contemporary existence, because it somehow brought together, however tenuously, the whole range and spectrum, manifestation and extreme, of the American breed and temper. In the Sixties, as in the broader settlements of Scott Fitzgerald's "vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night," the disposition of the great city was inordinate and almost breathlessly intoxicating, but it also seemed to be waiting for something.

Another word—not as nice as portentous—for this kind of writing is corny. There is a lot of corniness in sixties literary journalism, and the reason for it sounds a little corny, too. It's that those writers still cared about America. It's not that they loved it, or sought to honor it; it's that they found it endlessly and intoxicatingly interesting. That the country was undergoing a major identity crisis because of the war was one of the things that made for interest. But the country was also a much more regionally differentiated place than it is now. You could travel from one part of it to another—from Yazoo City to Manhattan, for example—and feel as though you had entered an alien culture. This culture gap is what made for the central drama in "North Toward Home": a white liberal from Mississippi was a great exotic in Manhattan in 1967, which is why it was so important for Morris then to emphasize his struggle to acclimate, to show the natives how strange they looked. One of the reasons this drama is missing from "New York Days" is that none of us are as strange as we used to be.

THE end of Morris's *Harper's*, in March of 1971, was only one episode in an industry-wide collapse. *The Saturday Evening Post* had already died its agonizing death. *Look* closed down in October, *Life* a little more than a year later. Hayes resigned abruptly from *Esquire* in 1973, and the magazine fell into an extended period of deficits and musical ownership. Warren Hinckle had been forced out at *Ramparts* in the late sixties; it ceased publication in 1976. *The New American Review* lasted until 1977. *Harper's*, which had been losing circulation at the end of Morris's editorship, struggled on until 1980, when it was bought in a fire sale by the MacArthur Foundation. It is now run as a nonprofit company.

General-interest magazines are highly G.N.P.-sensitive creatures, and the Nixon recession was the chief reason for the blight. But the war and, to a much lesser but significant extent, the anti-materialism of the counterculture were also to blame, for they split the country apart, and with it the magazine audience. You could aim young, you could aim old, you could aim left or right—but you could not aim at the center, because the center was pretty much unoccupied. Having to take sides on the war was the worst thing that ever happened to most of these magazines: it drove off older, financially established readers and replaced them with younger readers whose shopping tastes were a lot less upscale. In 1966, the year before Schell's piece on Ben Suc appeared, *The New Yorker* led all magazines with 6,143 ad pages; by 1970, it was down to 4,038. The numbers stabilized, but by the time of Watergate, in 1973, the magazine's readership had a new profile. One of those readers was living in a one-room apartment in Cambridge. He had got himself an armchair, but it was secondhand. ♦

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# BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

## FICTION

### Body & Soul
by Frank Conroy
(Houghton Mifflin; $24.95)

AN unabashedly romantic first novel from the author of the tight, famously hard-nosed autobiography "Stop-Time," published in the mid-sixties, when Conroy was barely thirty. The novel, set in the same period, is full of Dickensian sentiment and coincidence; it deals not with jazz, as its title might suggest, but with a child prodigy, Claude Rawlings, who becomes a masterly classical pianist and a composer somewhat to the left of Bartók. Rawlings' steady progress is shaped at every turn by saintly teachers and benefactors; indeed, his golden rise is marred only by a failed marriage and by a passionate failed love affair, and by his belated discovery that he is illegitimate. (His mother is a kind of raffish blowup of the mother Conroy fashioned in "Stop-Time.") But Conroy, something of a jazz pianist himself, shows his old muscle when he writes about music—about the mystical aspects of performing and composing, about the mathematical depths of harmony, and about the endless, almost surrealistic work that it takes to be a first-rate musician.

## GENERAL

### American Slavery: 1619-1877
by Peter Kolchin
(Hill & Wang; $25)

THE miraculous achievement of this book is to condense the history of American slavery into two hundred and thirty-seven pages without sacrificing either the breadth or the complexity of the subject. Kolchin is alert to the unique characteristics of American slavery, and shows how the qualities that made slavery here different also made it more tenacious. His exploration of the slave experience itself is carefully considered, and displays a subtlety missing from earlier accounts. For the first half of this century, most historians focussed on the actions of white slaveholders. The slaves were presented as cheerful beneficiaries of plantation paternalism or as unfortunate victims of a brutal regime, but in either case they remained passive components of the system. In the sixties and seventies, historians with new attitudes (and new methods of historical research) were eager to discover evidence of black resistance and the continuation of African customs in America, and sometimes depicted a world in which slaves ordered their lives almost without white interference. There are fewer villains and heroes in Kolchin's portrayal, but there is more truth. He is similarly careful and undogmatic in exploring the relationship of slavery to racism—one of the biggest and most tangled questions faced by historians of slavery. No history book published this year is more important to understanding America's past and present than this concise, well-written, and sensibly argued survey of America's greatest shame.

### Broadsides from the Other Orders: A Book of Bugs
by Sue Hubbell
(Random House; $23)

AN excursion into an unloved part of the animal world, the realm of things that crawl and creep, fly and buzz, sting and bite. Hubbell, a professional beekeeper and an ardent student of nature, has selected thirteen different bugs (she assures us that entomologists use that term) to tell us about—among them dragonflies, daddy longlegs, water striders (which are also called Jesus bugs, because they walk upon the water), katydids, and blackflies. She relates how these creatures live their lives, how they mate (some pretty far-out stuff here), what good, if any, they do for man, how, in the case of the overpublicized, misnamed "killer bees," the threat of an imminent scourge has been shamelessly exaggerated. The book is full of startling statistics and bemusing facts: for every pound of people on earth, Hubbell says, there are three hundred pounds of insects; and a swarm of midges that contains fifty million individuals and can create a very loud noise weighs only one ounce. A chapter of the book appeared in this magazine. ◆

# SHOUTS AND MURMURS

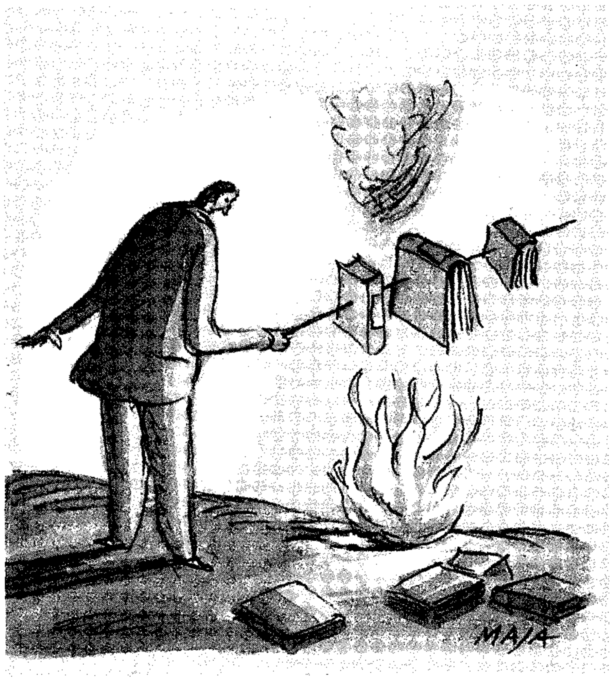
# THE WAY OF ALL TEXT

### BY JAY McINERNEY

OFF-LINE, taking some downtime from infosurfing the Internet, I make a back-yard pyre of the inert objects on my bookshelves. Hey, later for you dead white whales. Later for both my editions of "Ulysses"—the much underlined Random House text and the new Garland Press computer-generated three-volume variorum—along with miscellaneous editions of Shakespeare, eight out of thirteen volumes of the Ecco Press "Tales of Chekhov," Volume I of Nicholas Boyle's "Goethe: The Poet and the Age" (further installments of which haven't yet been completed, as far as I know), and all my collection of Vintage Contemporaries, including seven Ann Beatties, a bunch of Thomas McGuanes, and multiple copies of each of my own novels. (What the hell, they're on disk.)

I put aside some first editions, a few with mendaciously fond inscriptions from friends in the word-processing trade, others written by various deceased white males. For instance, a 1902 first American "The Wings of the Dove" in good shape and a very fine "Tender Is the Night" with dust jacket, slightly chipped. I spare these artifacts not out of any reactionary or politically incorrect sentiment but with the intention of converting them into cash at the local rare-hard-copy dealer.

It seems cruel and unusual, throwing three editions of "The Code of the Woosters" on the pile, and, one by one, the other Wodehouse novels, collections, and miscellanies in hard and soft formats. But chin up—Bertie Wooster's hardly the first aristocrat to go down in the flames of a revolution.



Some hard copy seems to demand preservation. Naturally, I exempt my MS-DOS, WordPerfect, and Windows 3.1 manuals from the fire. And Marshall McLuhan/Quentin Fiore's "The Medium Is the Massage." Also spared, natch, are the works of William Gibson, the James Brown of cyberpunk, including "Burning Chrome," "Mona Lisa Overdrive," and the classic "Neuromancer." Ditto Bruce Sterling. And Vernor Vinge's "True Names . . . and Other Dangers." But here's a dilemma: What about Bruce Wagner's novel "Force Majeure"? A nasty good read for sure, but still just a relic of the print-centric Gutenberg era. And yet Wagner is the creator of the virtually real TV miniseries "Wild Palms," and I plan to move to Hollywood soon and beg Oliver Stone—whom I met once at Nell's—to let me provide wetware for the sequel. And then there's Mark Leyner's "My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist," with its random-access-memory sampling of the pop-culture and haute-culture files. Great jacket, too. But it isn't interactive or anything. Bag it. With a slight pang, I toss it on the pile next to the latest Modern Language Association handbook. See you in cyberspace, Mark.

Hauling all those dead trees down to the back yard tires me out big time, so I flop on the couch to graze a recent issue of *Wired*, which arrived, anachronistically, in hard-copy format, via the United States Postal Service. *Wired* is the official organ of the digital generation, the magazine that, with its bold vision of a totally on-line, interactive post-print future, inspired my imminent Bonfire of the Eternal Verities. But this latest issue, to my extreme amazement, dubs text the Hot New Medium.

In a column about the "text's persistence" Paul Saffo, of the Institute for the Future, in Menlo Park, claims that the written word is happening. Listen to this:

> "An ever-growing media palette has failed to dislodge the centrality of the written word from our lives. We talk endlessly about new tech-arcana like video and virtual reality, but the conversation orbits around the stuff of this page—text. In fact, the written word doesn't just remain; it is flourishing like kudzu vines at the boundaries of the digital revolution."

Whoa!

I rescue Bertie and Jeeves first. The others will soon be snug on their shelves again. For a while, anyway—Paul Saffo thinks that the arbitrary print-centric divisions between author, editor, and reader won't survive the decade. I'm immediately asking my editor to take me to lunch while our respective roles are still pretty clear. ♦

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